

# **Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office**

## **2022 Annual Report**





## **PINAL COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE**

**John Hu, MD, Ph.D.**

**Chief Medical Examiner**

570 West Adamsville Road

Florence, Arizona 85132

Phone: (520) 866-7260

### **OFFICE HOURS:**

The Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Medical Examiner's Office hours 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on official Pinal County holidays.

[pinalcountyz.gov/medicalexaminer](http://pinalcountyz.gov/medicalexaminer)

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# A Message From PCMEO Administration



The Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office investigates sudden, violent, unexpected, and suspicious deaths that occur within the geographical boundaries of Pinal County. The Office of the Medical Examiner certifies death after an investigation and in most cases, a postmortem examination is completed. The PCMEO is charged with issuing the cause and manner of death as required by law. Complete findings of the death investigation are distributed to families and law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

The main duties of the Office of the Medical Examiner are to confirm identification of the deceased, determine the cause and manner of death, and certify deaths that fall under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner. The cause of death is the disease process or injury that resulted in death. There are thousands of diseases and injuries that may result in death. The manner of death is a classification as to how the death occurred (natural causes, homicide, suicide, or an accident). On occasion, the manner of death is classified as undetermined.

Pertinent information regarding the death to include (but not limited to) known circumstances of death, scene findings, and medical history collected by PCMEO's medicolegal investigators during the course of the investigation is subsequently documented in an investigative report. This allows the assigned forensic pathologist to obtain context with regard to the terminal events, and helps to clarify the known sequence of events prior to death. Evidence collected during the course of the postmortem examination may help lead to the arrest or successful conviction of a suspect in a homicide case. Because deaths occur around the clock, medical examiner staff members are available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. With the skill and experience of the medicolegal investigators and board-certified forensic pathologists, we believe the quality of death investigations overseen by the PCMEO are among the best in the State.

Our medical examiners and investigators also extend their duties to the living by answering questions and addressing concerns regarding deaths reported to or investigated by the PCMEO. Medicolegal investigators frequently make personal contact with family members of a deceased with any inquiries regarding the circumstances of the death. Medical examiner investigators are supplied with a pamphlet for distribution to families. The information provides answers to common questions and facts about the process and also provides resource information pertaining to local funeral homes, obtaining reports, and accessing death certificates.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Pinal County Board of Supervisors, our various partners within the Pinal County law enforcement community, and Pinal County medical centers for their support of the PCMEO and the services we provide to the citizens of the Pinal County.

# We are Relocating!

In February 2022, Pinal County officials gathered to break ground on the new Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office facility located on Bowling Road in Florence, Arizona. We are happy to announce that the PCMEO will relocate to the new 15,000-square-foot, 8.1 million-dollar facility in May 2023.

The new facility was designed to meet the standards set forth by the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME). It will include an expanded office, state-of-the-art examination stations, an elevated, glass-walled observation area to allow law enforcement officials to witness exams while isolated from biological hazards, and morgue space adequate to meet the office's needs, given the sustained population growth of Pinal County. Further, the facility will include modern amenities for specimen and toxicology storage, cold storage with the capacity to accommodate over 100 deceased individuals, and a Pinnacle PUA-D U-Arm DR Radiograph System.



# Letter of Appreciation



PCMEO leadership and staff would like to express our gratitude and sincere appreciation to Samantha "Sam" Kuba, who, after seven years of employment with the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office, will be departing the office to attend the University of West Virginia to pursue a Masters of Health Science degree as required to become a pathologist assistant.

Sam began her tenure with the PCMEO in 2016. At that time, the PCMEO transitioned from contracting postmortem examination services with neighboring Pima County to conducting all postmortem examinations in-house. As such, at the time she was hired, Sam was challenged with developing and overseeing the PCMEO's newly created morgue

operations. This included procuring all necessary examination equipment, training medicolegal investigators in postmortem exam and specimen collection techniques, and developing and implanting morgue-related protocols and procedures.

From 2016 until 2019, Sam served as the sole forensic technician with the PCMEO, during which time she assisted our chief medical examiner with the postmortem examination of approximately 350 decedents annually.

In 2019, Sam was promoted to the well-earned position of senior forensic technician and was instrumental in developing the PCMEO's Forensic Technician Internship program. The program has since been successful, with one previous intern preparing to enter medical school and two others subsequently hired by the PCMEO.

We greatly appreciate Sam's tireless service to the office and wish her well with her studies and future career as a pathologist assistant.

# MISSION

The Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office strives to accomplish its mission to conduct thorough and professional medicolegal death investigations of individuals who have died under statutorily defined circumstances within the geographical boundaries of Pinal and contracted neighboring counties. The results of the death investigation are reached objectively and communicated independently to relevant agencies, industries, and members of the public in effort to enhance public safety and health.

# VISION

The Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office and all personnel strive to be recognized as a trustworthy source of accurate, scientifically-based assessments of deaths in our community. This is achieved by having certified practitioners perform industry-standard professional death investigations.

## VALUES

**Service** ~ We hold service to be the highest of values. We commit to effective, positive, ethical, and compassionate service to all members of the public and to one another.

**Integrity** ~ We commit to being professional and courteous in all our interactions, both with the public we serve and with each other. We commit to being honest, ethical, and diligent -- to do our best. We commit to being personally accountable for our words and actions and to help cultivate an organization of integrity by expecting the same of others. We do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

**Compassion** ~ We commit to being empathetic, both to the public we serve and to one another, to be mindful of our speech and actions and how they may affect others. We recognize that honest, kind communication, even in the face of conflict, is an act of compassion.

**Positivity** ~ We recognize that our perspective is critical to our attitude and that realistic assessments do not require negativity. We commit to approaching challenges with a positive attitude.

**Adaptability** ~ We recognize that nothing is constant. We commit to seeing the positive in change, that it is an opportunity for improvement.

**Teamwork** ~ We recognize the critical importance of other members of our department and of those outside our department with whom we work – we all have a role to play on the team. We commit to cultivating a positive, collaborative, service- and solutions-oriented environment by working together.

**Boundaries** ~ We recognize that we must speak and act within certain bounds, that in order to be effective as a team we must focus on doing our best in our role on the team. We commit to working diligently within the bounds of our roles, being mindful not to attempt to take on inappropriate roles or to judge or undermine those in other roles.

# Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) and the Medical Examiner

Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) § 11-593, the Office of the Medical Examiner provides death investigation and postmortem examination services for deaths that occur within the geographical boundaries of Pinal County and are considered to be sudden, violent, suspicious, unexplained, or unattended. The Medical Examiner has the authority to order an autopsy at any time it is deemed necessary to determine or confirm the cause and manner of death. Not all deaths reported to Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office fall under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner. Some of the deaths reported are certified by the decedent's primary care physician. In order to be considered a Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office case, the death must have occurred within the borders of Pinal County or within a county or region in which the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office has authority pursuant to a intergovernmental agreement.

## 11-593. Reporting of certain deaths; failure to report; violation; classification

A. Any person having knowledge of the occurrence of the death of a human being including a fetal death that is required to be reported pursuant to subsection B, of this section shall promptly notify the nearest peace officer of all information in the person's possession regarding the death and the circumstances surrounding it.

## B. Reporting is required in the following circumstances:

1. Death when not under the current care of a health care provider as defined pursuant to section 36-301.
2. Death resulting from violence.
3. Unexpected or unexplained death.
4. Death of a person in a custodial agency as defined in section 13-4401.
5. Unexpected or unexplained death of an infant or child.
6. Death occurring in a suspicious, unusual, or unnatural manner, including death from an accident believed to be related to the deceased person's occupation or employment.
7. Death occurring as a result of anesthetic or surgical procedures.
8. Death suspected to be caused by a previously unreported or undiagnosed disease that constitutes a threat to public safety.
9. Death involving unidentifiable bodies.

# Arizona

## Revised Statutes (ARS) and the Medical Examiner (continued)

### 36-861. Medical examiner; release of information

A. The county medical examiner or individual legally delegated that authority shall release the name, contact, information, and available medical and social history of a decedent whose body is under the jurisdiction of the medical examiner to:

1. The designated procurement organization, hospital, accredited medical school, dental school, college, or university of an anatomical gift executed pursuant to section 36-844.
2. Any procurement organization under procedures adopted by the medical examiner for coordination of the procurement of anatomical gifts.

B. If the decedent's body or part is medically suitable for transplantation, therapy, research, or education, the medical examiner, or individual legally delegated to that authority, shall release postmortem examination results to a procurement organization. The procurement organization may make a subsequent disclosure of the postmortem examination results or other information received from the medical examiner only if relevant to transplantation or therapy.

In accordance with Arizona Revised Statute 36-861, Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office partners with Donor Network of Arizona for the procurement of anatomic gifts. Our office aids in the gift of cornea donation which allows for the improvement and restoration of sight for those who have suffered from ocular trauma and disease. We also aid in all forms of tissue donation which includes bone, cardiovascular, connective, and skin tissues. Donor Network of Arizona helps an estimated 1000 Arizonans annually through tissue donation and even more with cornea donation. All donations requested through the PCMEO are authorized by our medical examiners.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

John Hu, MD, PhD  
Chief Medical Examiner

## Administration

Andre Davis, F-ABMDI  
Investigations  
Supervisor/Operations Manager

Sean Harper  
Administrative Specialist

Cheryl Allott  
Administrative Assistant Senior

## Pathology

Andrea L. Wiens, DO  
Forensic Pathologist

Carolyn Cross, MD  
Forensic Pathologist (PT)

Kevin Horn, MD  
Forensic Pathologist (PT)

Philip Keen, MD  
Forensic Pathologist (PT)

## Investigations Section

Suzi Dodt, F-ABMDI  
Senior Medicolegal Investigator

Heather Robertson, MS, D-ABMDI  
Medicolegal Investigator

Sam Dungan  
Medicolegal Investigator

Julia Rivera, MS  
Medicolegal Investigator

Courtney Koppenhaver-Astrom, Ph.D., D-ABMDI  
Medicolegal Investigator/Forensic Anthropologist

Emily Vecchi, MS  
Medicolegal Investigator

Baily Seppelt  
Medicolegal Investigator

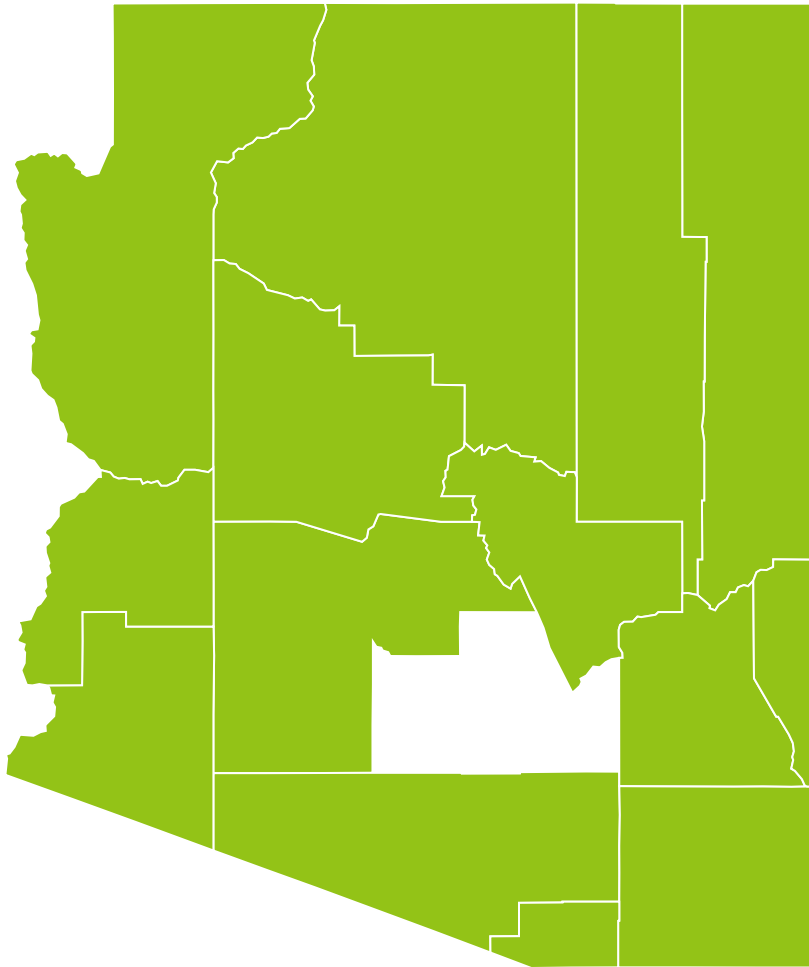
## Morgue Section

Sam Kuba, D-ABMDI  
Senior Forensic Technician

Breanna McGinnis, D-ABMDI  
Forensic Technician

Madison Smith  
Forensic Technician Intern

# Pinal County Caseload



# PINAL COUNTY CASELOAD AT A GLANCE

## **Definitions:**

**Declined Jurisdiction:** refers to cases that are reported to the Medical Examiner's Office but jurisdiction is not invoked as the circumstances of death do not meet PCMEO criteria subsequent to Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) § 11-593.

**Invoked Jurisdiction:** refers to cases that are reported to the Medical Examiner's Office and jurisdiction is invoked in accordance with Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) § 11-593.

**Examinations:** postmortem examinations to include external examinations, limited examinations, and full examinations conducted by the Medical Examiner.

- Full Autopsy: a complete external and internal examination of a decedent.
- Limited Examination: an examination in which dissection of the body is limited to a specific organ or region of the body, i.e., heart. The limited examination also includes an external examination.
- External Examination: an examination of the exterior of a decedent.

**Deaths certified without postmortem examination:** death certificates that are certified by PCMEO following a medical records review without a postmortem examination.

**Death Certificate Case:** refers to cases that meet the Arizona Revised Statute (ARS) § 11-593 and thus; PCMEO jurisdiction is invoked, however; a postmortem examination is not required in effort to certify the death.

# PINAL COUNTY CASELOAD AT A GLANCE

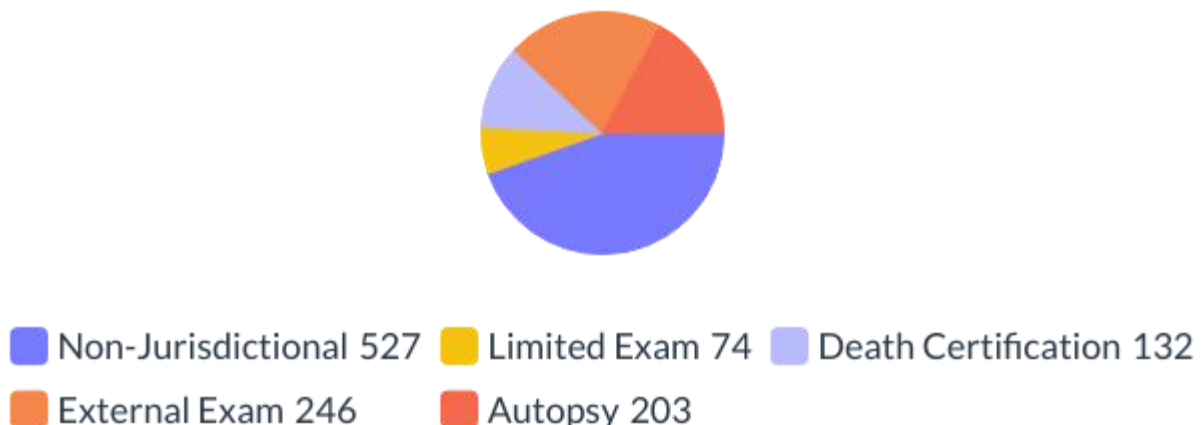
1,182 Pinal County deaths were reported to and subsequently investigated by the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office in 2022. Of the 1,182 total cases reported, the PCMEO invoked jurisdiction and determined the cause and manner of death for seven hundred ten (710) cases:

Pinal County population (2021).....	464,154
Total cases reported to the PCMEO .....	1,182
ME jurisdiction invoked.....	655
Number of deaths certified after postmortem examination .....	523
Number of deaths certified without postmortem examination.....	132
Number of deaths not certified by the Medical Examiner's Office.....	527
Non-human remains.....	10
Cremation permit authorizations.....	2,351

## 2022 Pinal County Caseload by Jurisdictional Determination

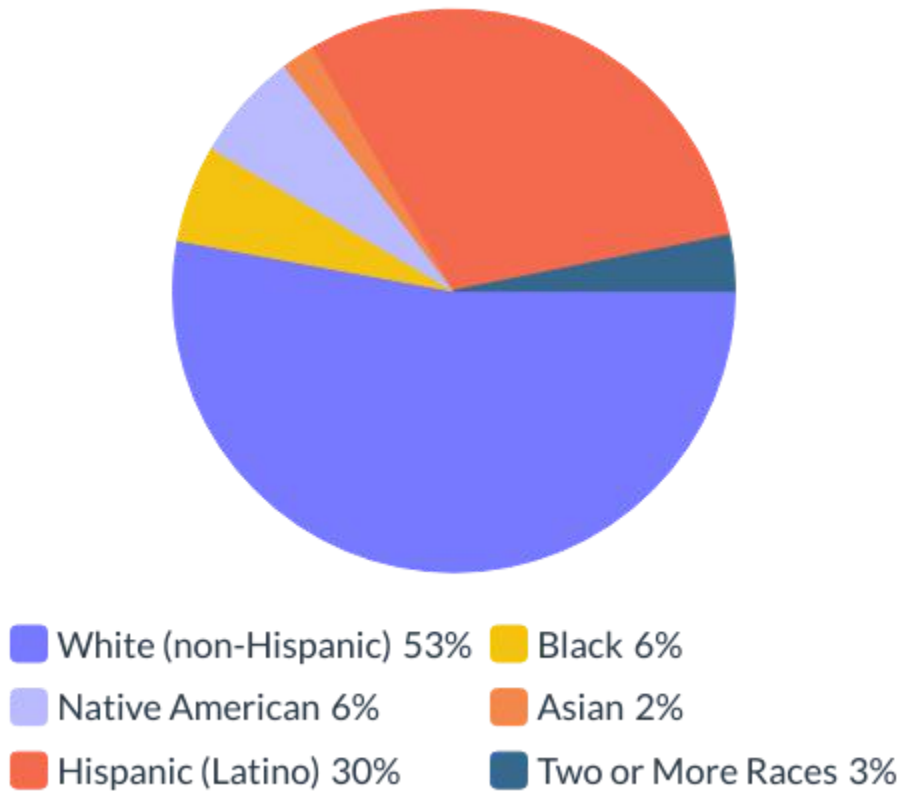


## Pinal County Caseload by Disposition/Exam Type

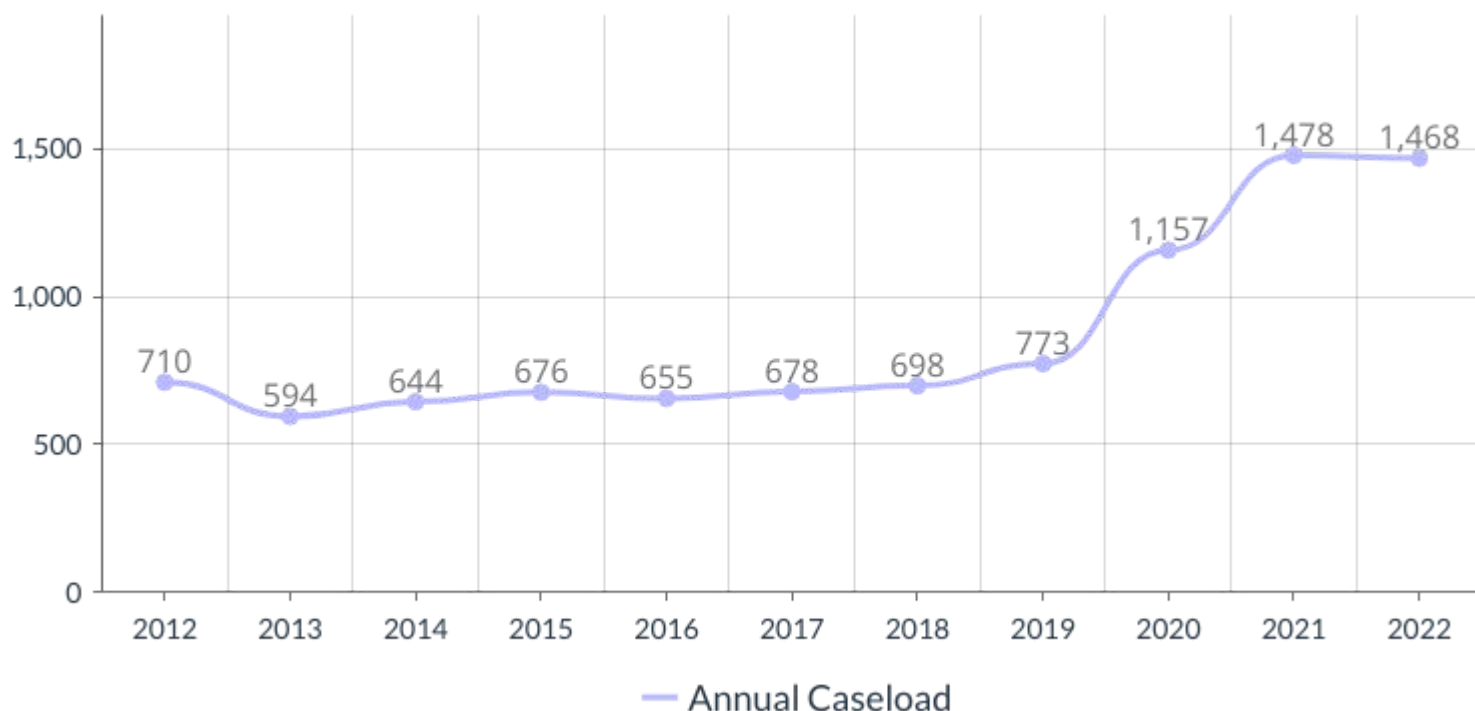


# Pinal County Demographics

Pinal County Race/Ethnicity 2022

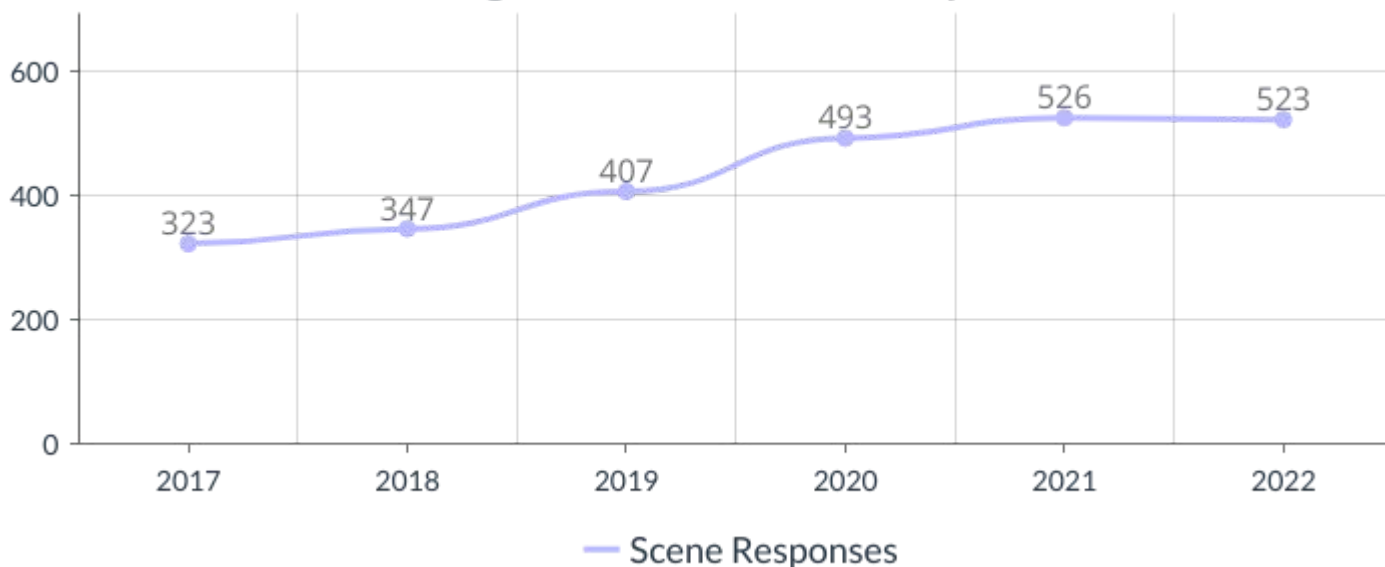


## PCMEO Annual Caseload Trend

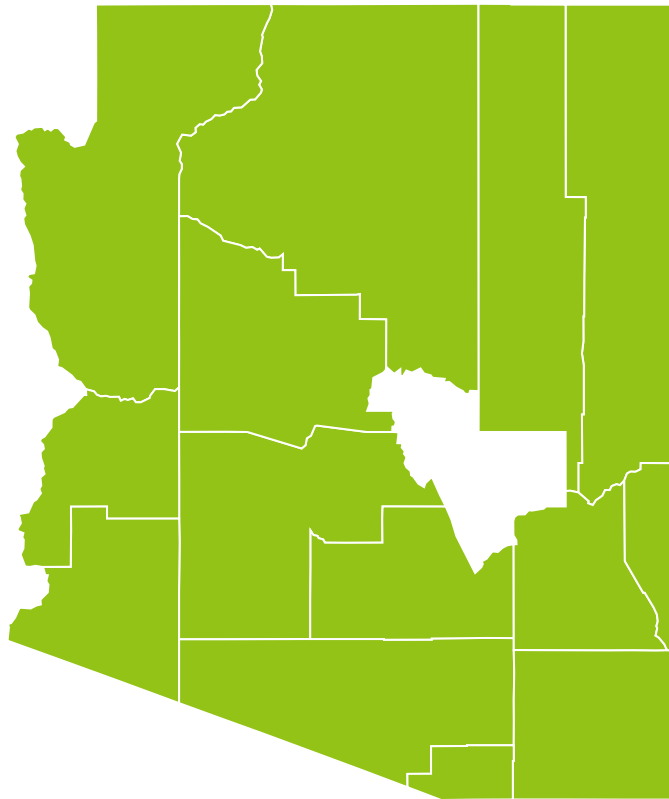


The PCMEO employs seven full-time medicolegal death investigators (MDIs). MDIs are primarily responsive for investigating any death that falls under the jurisdiction of the PCMEO including all suspicious, violent, and unexplained deaths. Medicolegal death investigators perform scene investigations in addition to collecting records and histories, and conducting interviews. In 2022, PCMEO MDIs responded to 511 scenes within the geographical boundaries of Pinal County.

## PCMEO Investigator Annual Scene Response -Trend



# Gila County Caseload

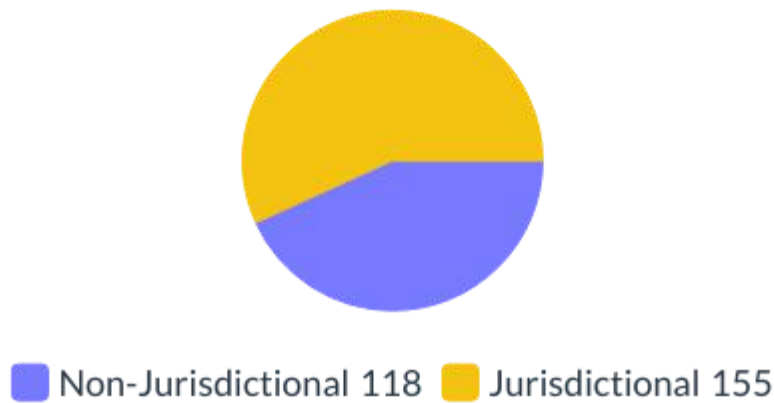


# GILA COUNTY CASELOAD

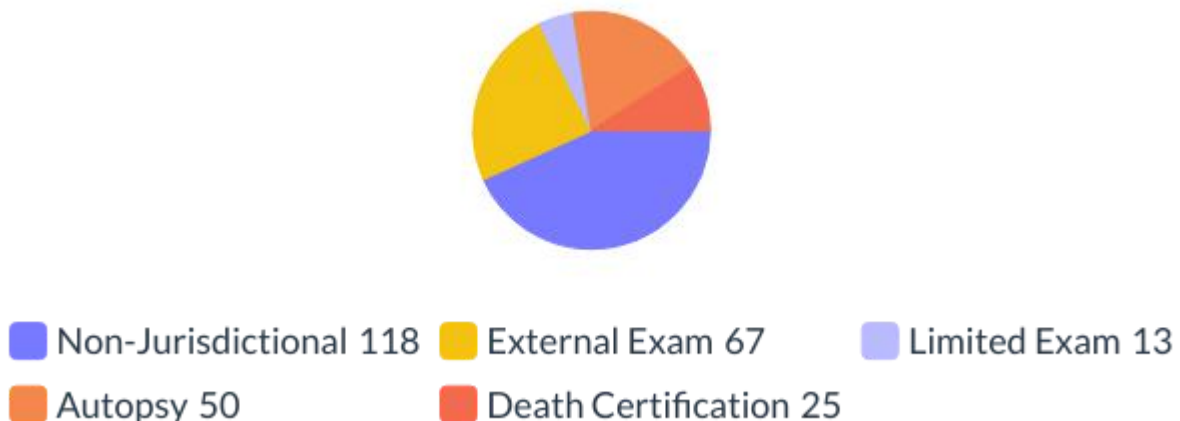
Two-hundred seventy-two (272) Gila County deaths were reported to and subsequently investigated by the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office in 2022. Of the 272 total cases reported, the PCMEO subsequently invoked jurisdiction and determined the cause and manner of death for one-hundred fifty-four (154) cases:

Gila County population (2020).....	54,018
Total cases reported to the PCMEO .....	273
ME jurisdiction invoked.....	155
Number of deaths certified after postmortem examination .....	130
Number of deaths certified without postmortem examination.....	25
Number of deaths not certified by the Medical Examiner's Office.....	118
Non-human remains.....	0
Cremation permit authorizations.....	604

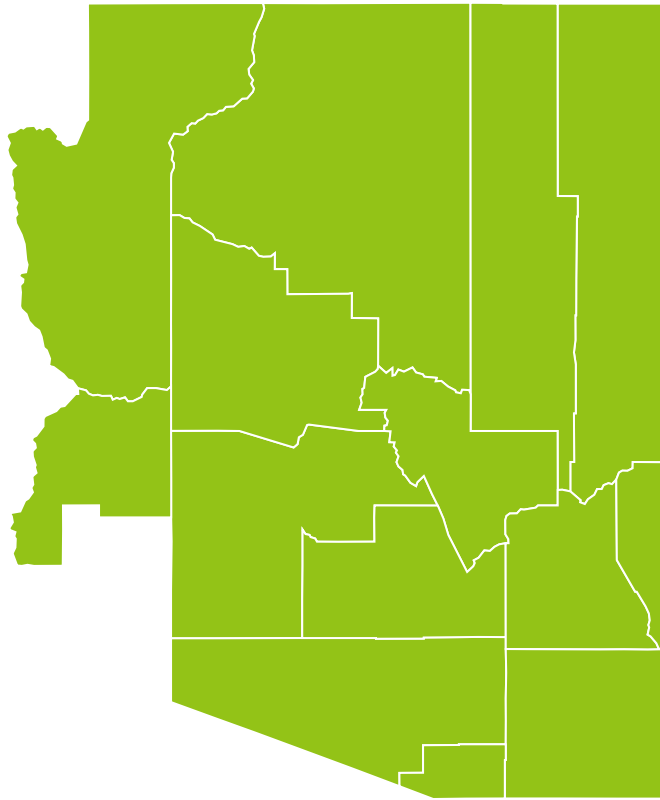
## 2020 Gila County Caseload by Jurisdictional Determination



## 2020 Gila County Caseload by Disposition/Exam Type



# Yuma County Caseload



# YUMA COUNTY CASELOAD

Twenty-three (23) Yuma County deaths were reported to and subsequently investigated by the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office in 2022. The PCMEO invoked jurisdiction and determined the cause and manner of death for all 23 reported cases:

Yuma County population (2021 census data).....	206,990
Total cases reported to the PCMEO .....	23
ME jurisdiction invoked.....	23
Number of deaths certified after postmortem examination .....	23
Number of deaths certified without postmortem examination.....	0



of Yuma County cases that were transported to  
the PCMEO received a full postmortem  
examination (autopsy)

# ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Pursuant to A.R.S §36-861, the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office works to ensure that an anatomical donation is an option for the families of individuals that die outside of Arizona hospitals. The PCMEO partners with the Donor Network of Arizona to coordinate and procure anatomic gifts. Anatomic gifts can be life-saving for organ and tissue recipients, and these donations are always in short supply. In 2022, the PCMEO submitted 435 cases for referral to the Donor Network of Arizona for procurement.

ORGAN DONORS

0

TISSUE DONORS

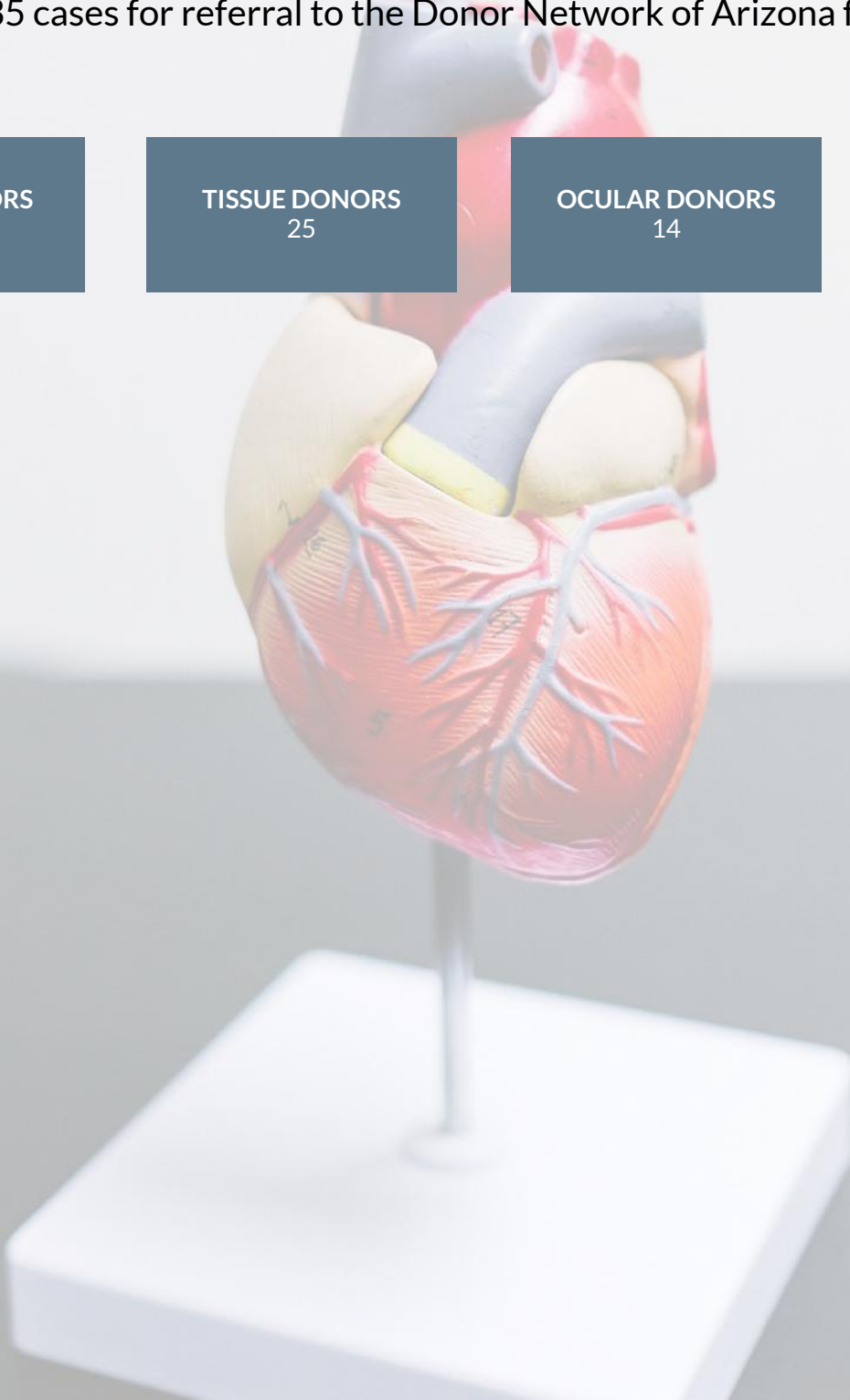
25

OCULAR DONORS

14

HEART VALVE  
DONORS

16



# Pinal County Deaths by Law Enforcement Agency Jurisdiction

## **Arizona Department of Public Safety**

Invoked: 38

Non-Jurisdictional: 0

## **Arizona Department of Corrections**

Invoked: 34

Non-Jurisdictional: 0

## **Apache Junction Police Department**

Invoked: 106

Non-Jurisdictional: 46

## **Casa Grande Police Department**

Invoked: 144

Non-Jurisdictional: 56

## **Coolidge Police Department**

Invoked: 26

Non-Jurisdictional: 11

## **Eloy Police Department**

Invoked: 17

Non-Jurisdictional: 9

## **Florence Police Department**

Invoked: 24

Non-Jurisdictional: 15

## **Gila River Police Department**

Invoked: 36

Non-Jurisdictional: 9

## **Kearny Police Department**

Invoked: 2

Non-Jurisdictional: 2

## **Hayden Police Department**

Invoked: 0

Non-Jurisdictional: 0

## **Maricopa County Sheriff's Office**

Invoked: 1

Non-Jurisdictional: 0

## **Maricopa Police Department**

Invoked: 41

Non-Jurisdictional: 37

## **Mammoth Police Department**

Invoked: 0

Non-Jurisdictional: 1

## **Pinal County Sheriff's Office**

Invoked: 236

Non-Jurisdictional: 151

## **Queen Creek Police Department**

Invoked: 10

Non-Jurisdictional: 5

## **Superior Police Department**

Invoked: 4

Non-Jurisdictional: 3

# Manner of Death Defined

The manner of death is the determination of how an injury or disease process led to death. There are five manners of death: natural, accident, suicide, homicide, and undetermined:

**Accident:** an unnatural death resulting from an inadvertent chance happening

**Homicide:** the action of one person directly and purposefully causing the death of another

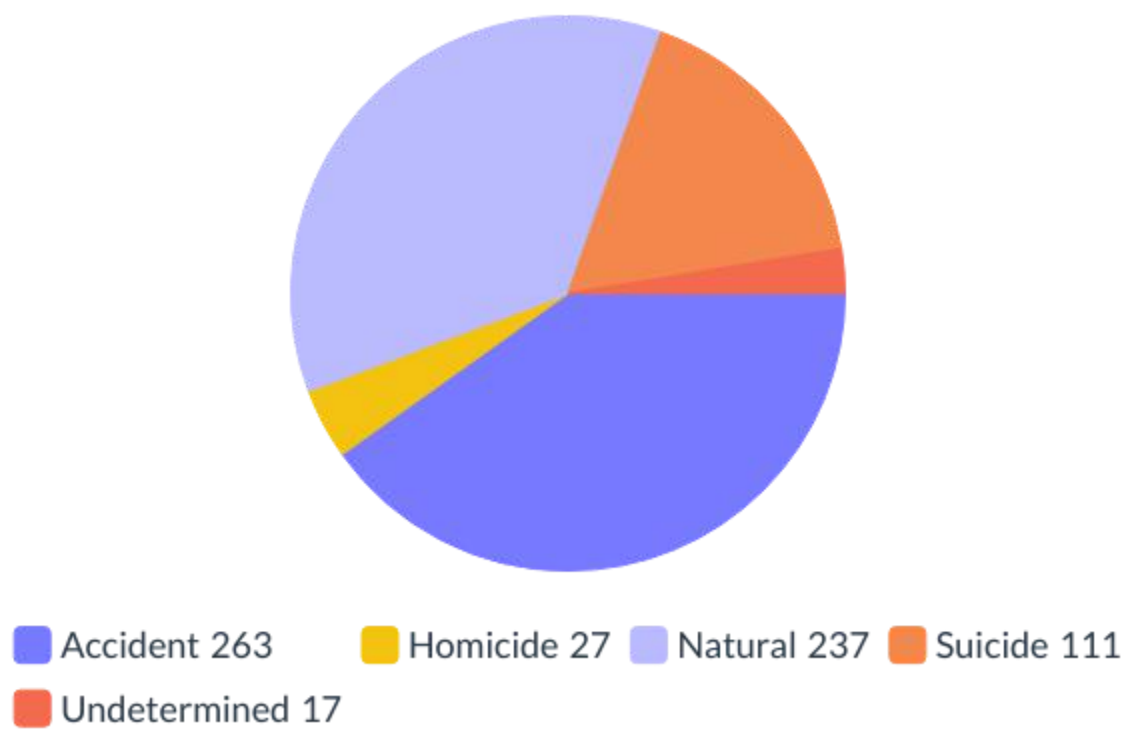
**Natural:** death solely due to natural disease processes

**Suicide:** death from a self-inflicted injury with the intent to cause self-harm/death

**Undetermined:** no clear evidence supporting any specific manner

The manner of death classifications are medical determinations and should not be confused with the legal classifications of death. Of the six hundred twenty-three (623) Pinal County cases for which the PCMEO invoked jurisdiction:

2022 Pinal County Jurisdictional Deaths by Manner of Death



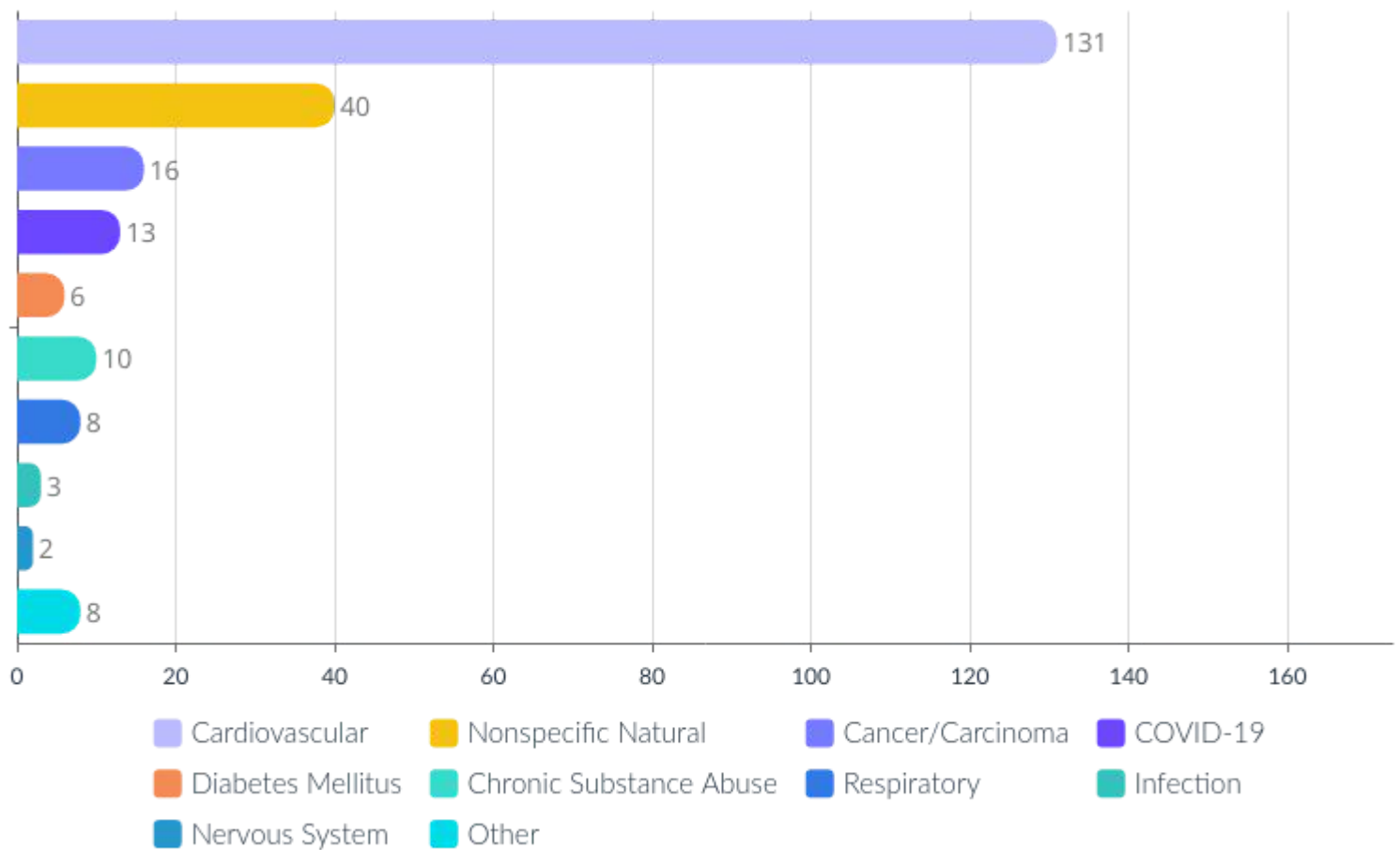
# Natural Deaths



# Natural Deaths

Deaths due solely to natural disease processes (natural deaths) were the second most common manner of death for Pinal County cases for which the PCMEO invoked jurisdiction in 2022. Heart disease was the most common natural disease process, attributed as the immediate cause of death in approximately 55% of the total natural death cases.

## Most Common Natural Disease Processes by Frequency of Appearance on PCMEO Certified Death Certificates



Of note, the above list documents the number of times a disease process appeared on death certificates certified by the PCMEO. In many cases, multiple disease processes (for example, COPD and COVID-19) may have been documented as the immediate cause of death.

# Infant and Child Deaths



# Infant and Child Deaths

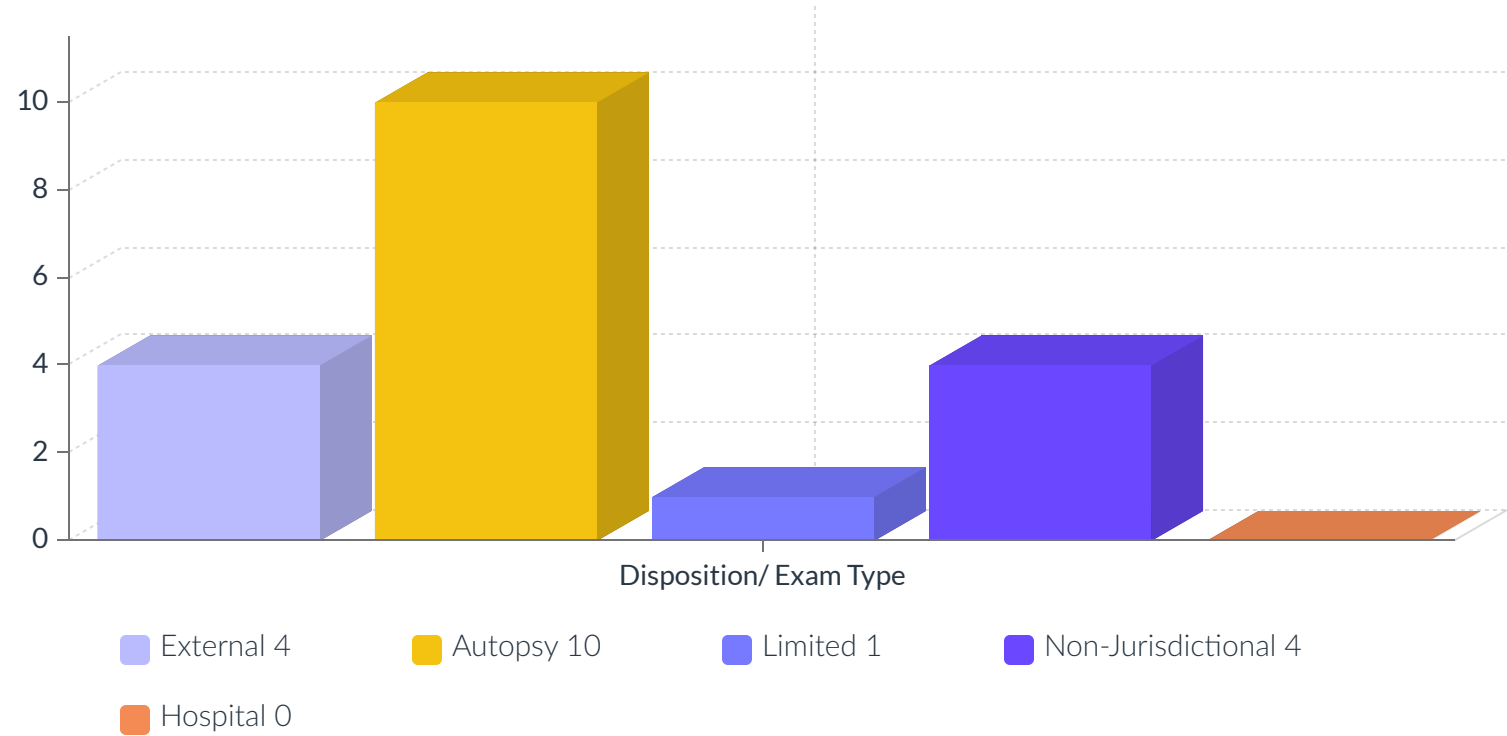
For purposes of this report, infant and child deaths are considered the death of an individual age ten (10) or younger. An individual is regarded as an infant until the age of one (1) year.

Of the nineteen (19) Infant/child deaths reported in 2022, fifteen (15) infant/child deaths were investigated and subsequently certified by PCMEO.

## Infant/Child Deaths by Type

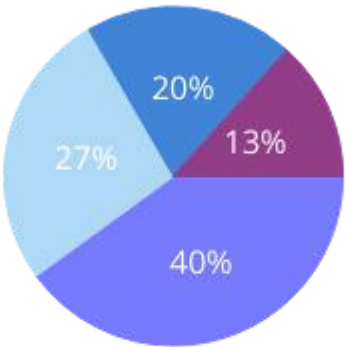
Asphyxia-Suffocation-Smothering.....	3
Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID).....	2
Gun (Handgun).....	1
Motor Vehicle (occupant).....	5
Sharp Force Injuries .....	1
Asphyxia (Drowning).....	1
Undetermined.....	2

## Infant/Child Deaths by Disposition/ Exam Type



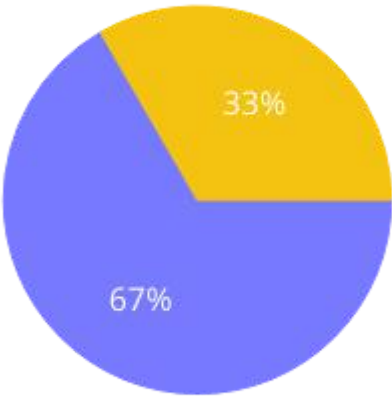
# Infant and Child Deaths- Demographics

Race/Ethnicity



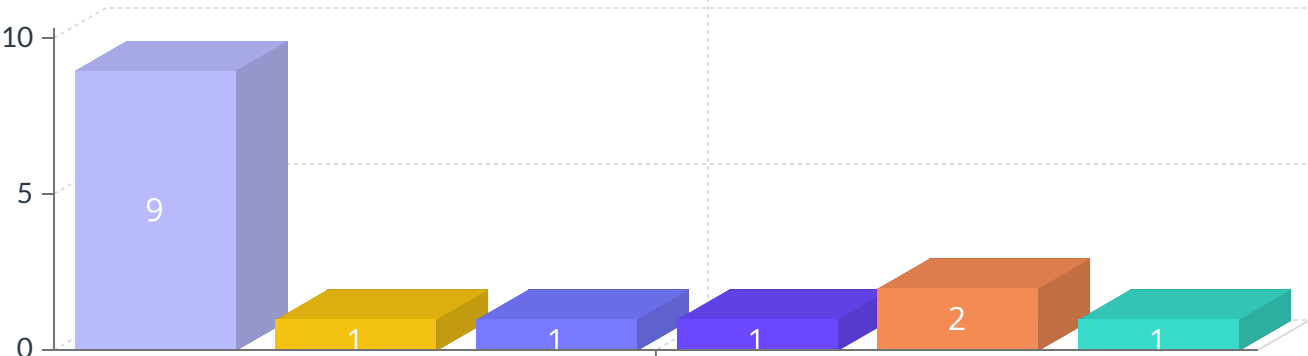
- African American 6
- Native American 4
- Caucasian 3
- Hispanic 2

Sex



- Male
- Female

Infant/Child Deaths by Age

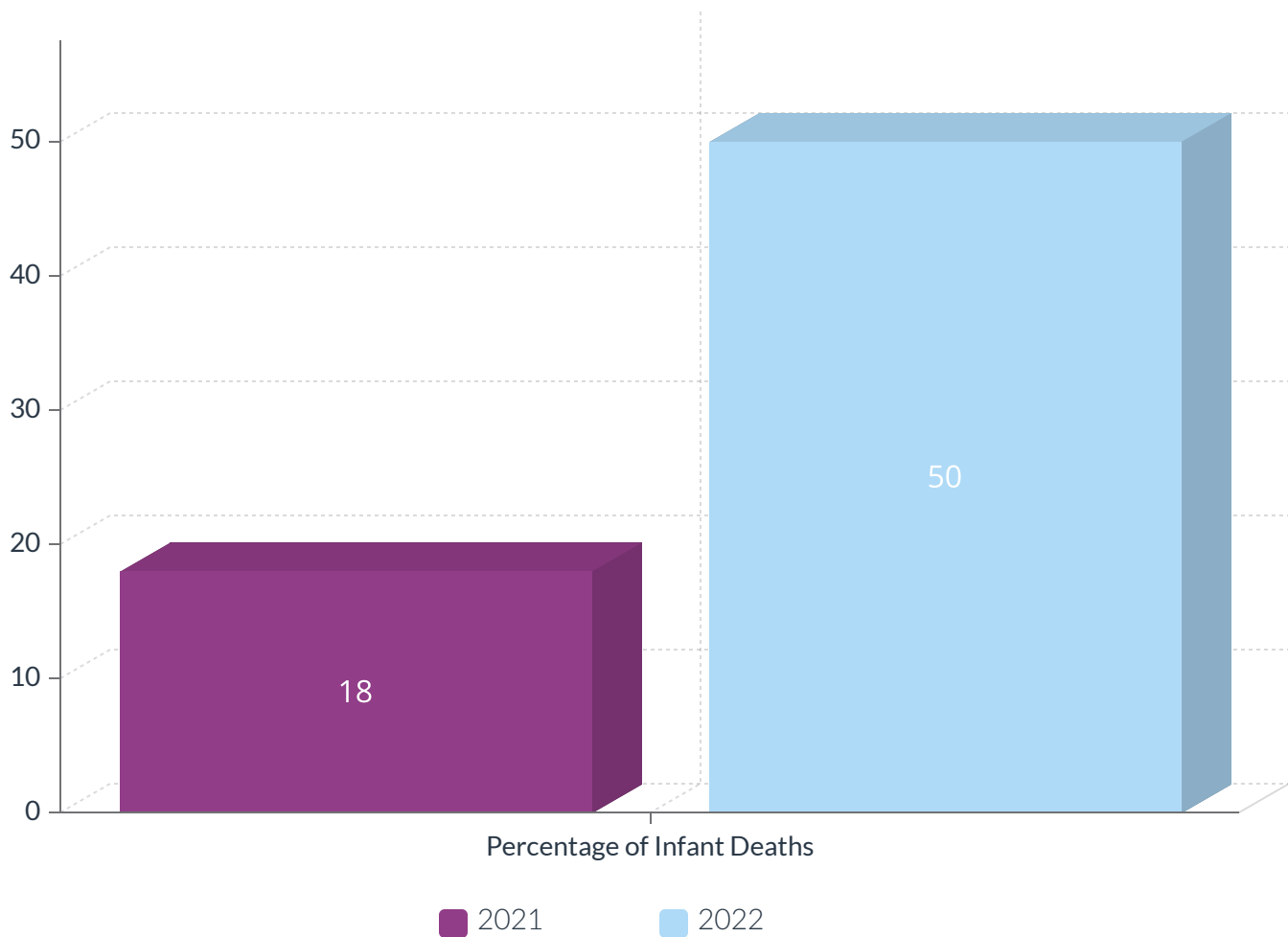


- Infant (<12 m)
- 1 Year
- 3 Years
- 4 years
- 5 years
- 6 years

# Infant Deaths- Unsafe Sleep Environment Related

In 2022, 50% of infants deaths investigated and subsequently certified by PCMEO were contributed to unsafe sleep environments. The rate of infant deaths contributed to or related to unsafe sleep environments increased by 32% from 2021 to 2022.

Infant Deaths Related to Unsafe Sleep Environment



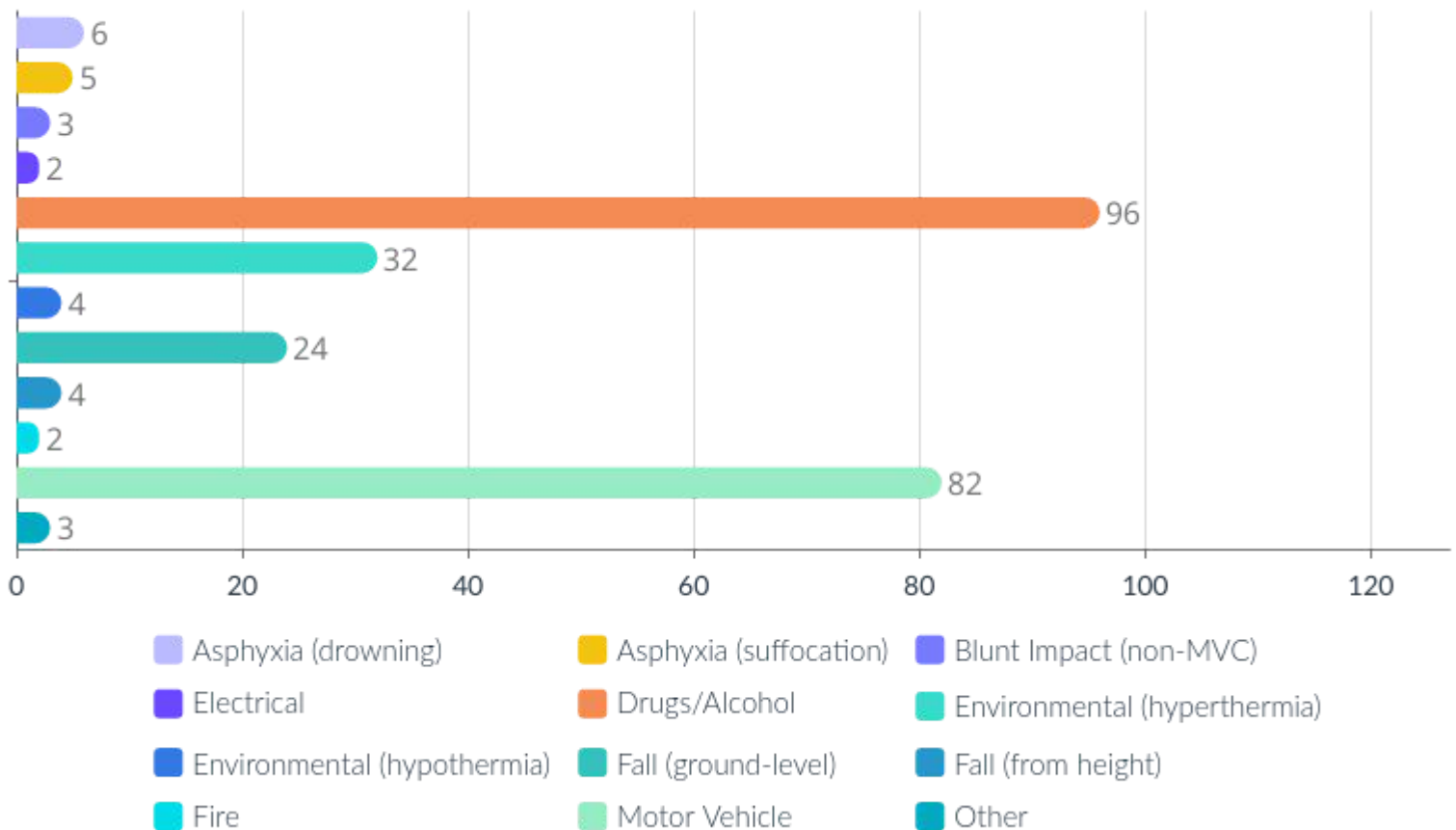
# Accidental Deaths



# Accidental Deaths

Two hundred sixty-three (263) Pinal County deaths reported to and investigated by the PCMEO in 2022 were subsequently ruled accidental. Of the 263 cases, the vast majority (96 cases) were determined to result from acute drug and/or ethyl alcohol intoxication. Deaths resulting from injuries sustained due to a motor vehicle collision comprised the second-highest category of accidental deaths.

2022 Pinal County Accidental Deaths by Incident Type



# Motor Vehicle Collision Deaths

Eighty-two (82) Pinal County motor vehicle-related deaths were reported to and investigated by the PCMEO in 2022. Drivers of passenger vehicles comprised the highest category of 2022 motor vehicle collision deaths.

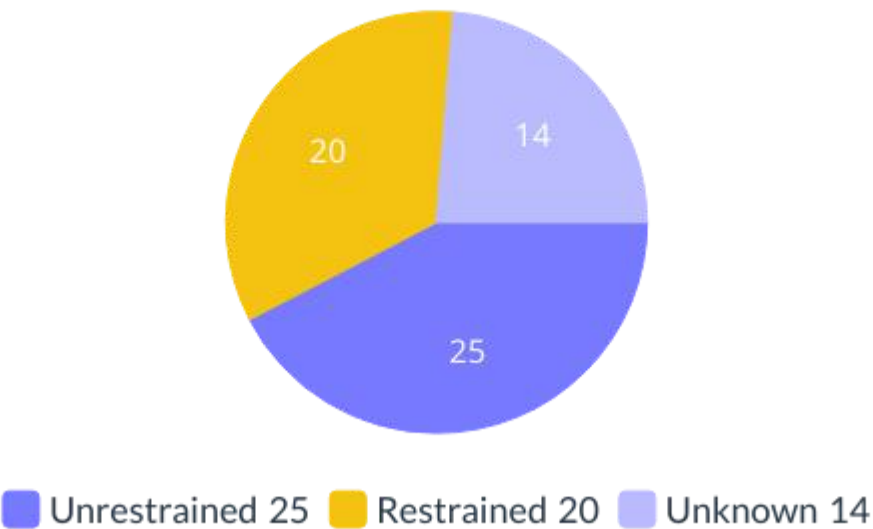
Of the fifty-nine (59) deaths involving either a driver or passenger of a passenger vehicle, 25, or 42%, were confirmed to have been unrestrained at the time of the collision.

Of the forty-five (45) deaths involving the driver of a passenger vehicle or rider/operator of a motorcycle, 27 were found to have been under the influence of either drugs or alcohol at the time of the incident.

2022 Motor Vehicle Collision Deaths by Decedent Position

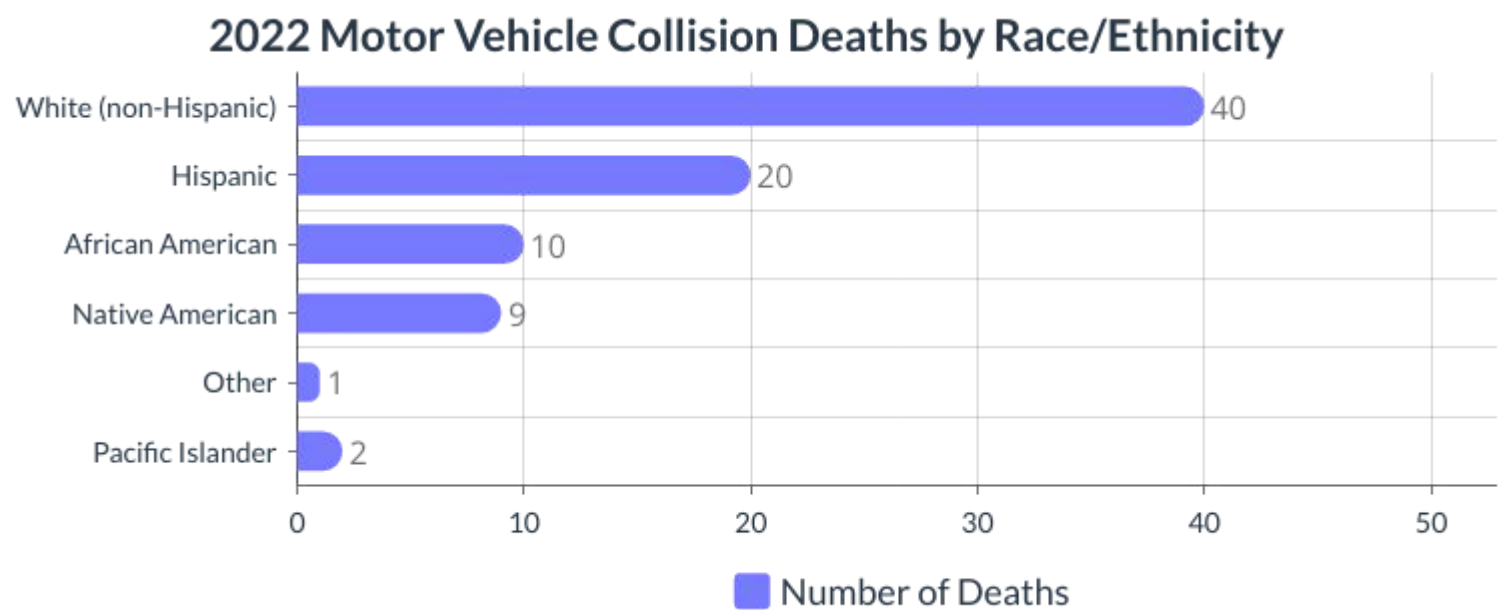
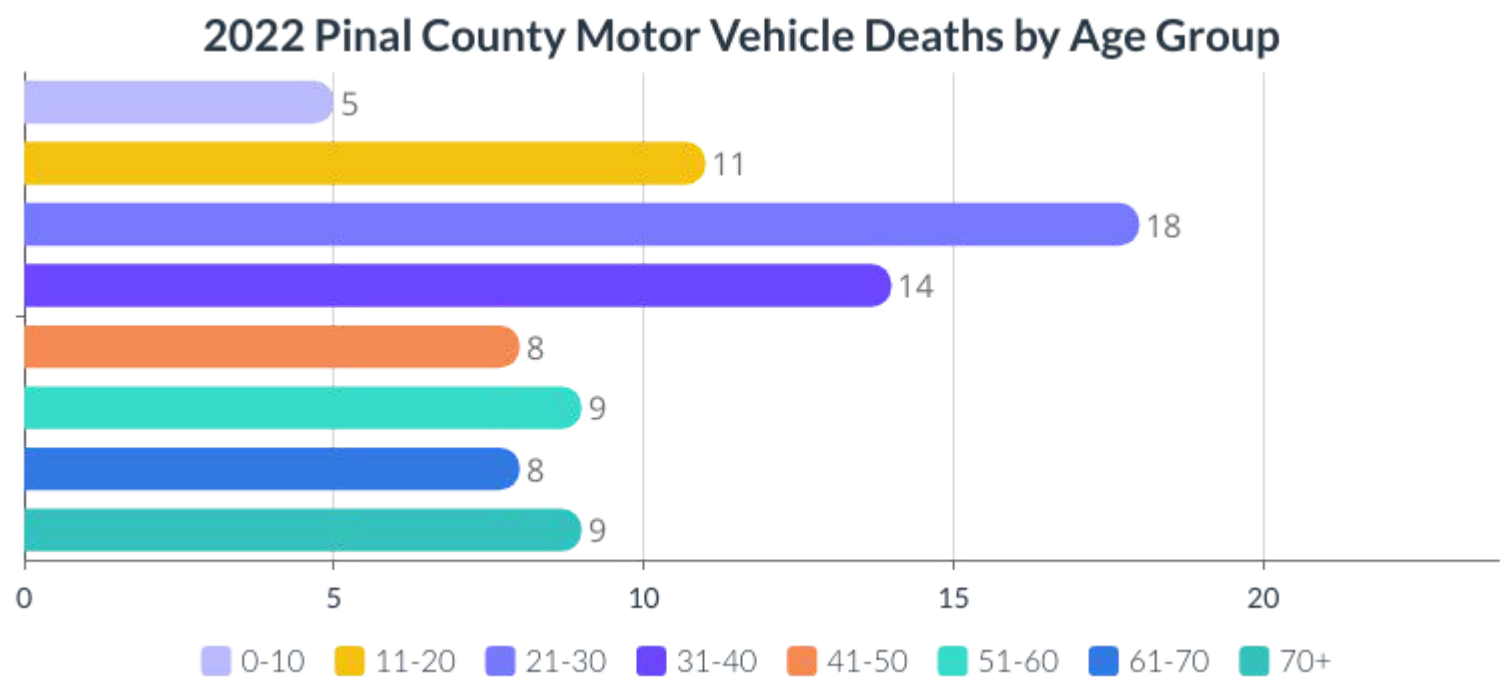


2022 Passenger Vehicle Deaths by Use of Restraints (seatbelts)



# Motor Vehicle Collision Deaths- Demographics

White (non-Hispanic) males within the 21-30 and 31-40 age range comprised the most significant majority of Pinal County motor vehicle collision deaths in 2022.



# Motor Vehicle Collision Deaths- Demographics

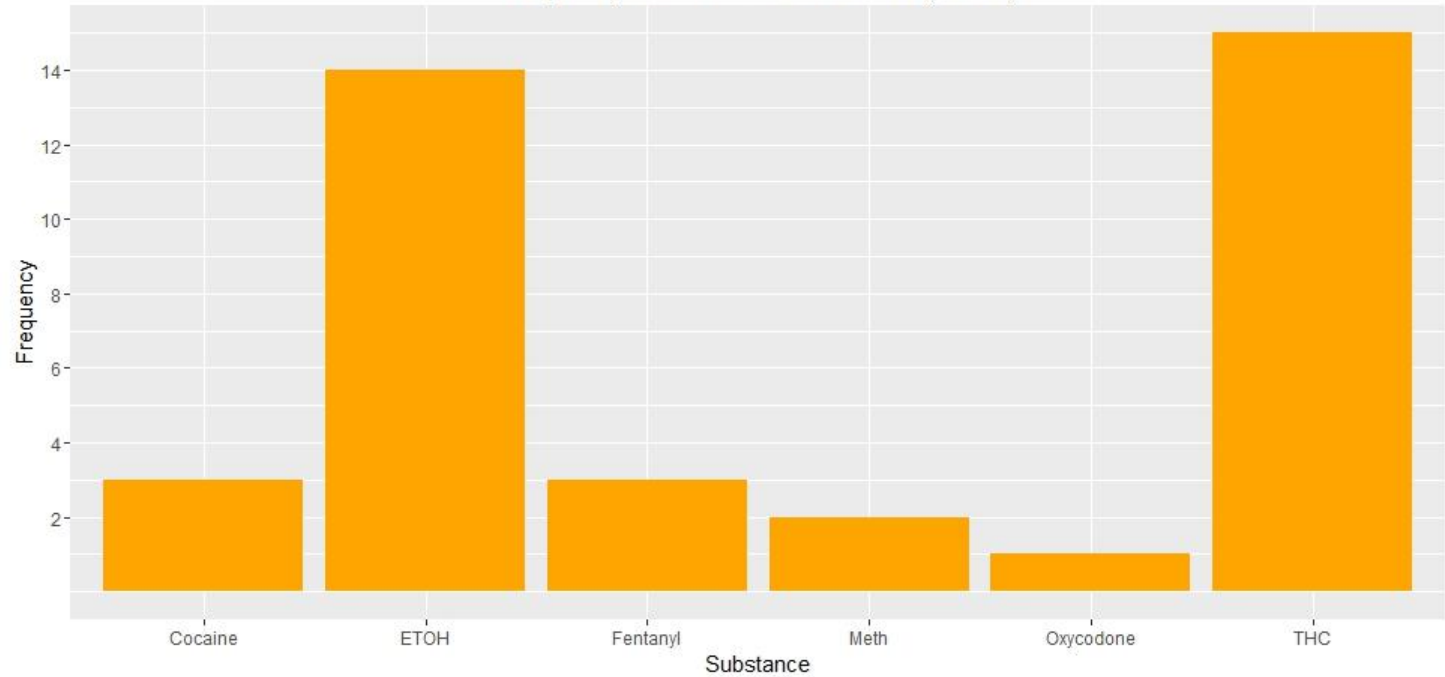
2022 Pinal County Motor Vehicle Collision Deaths by Sex



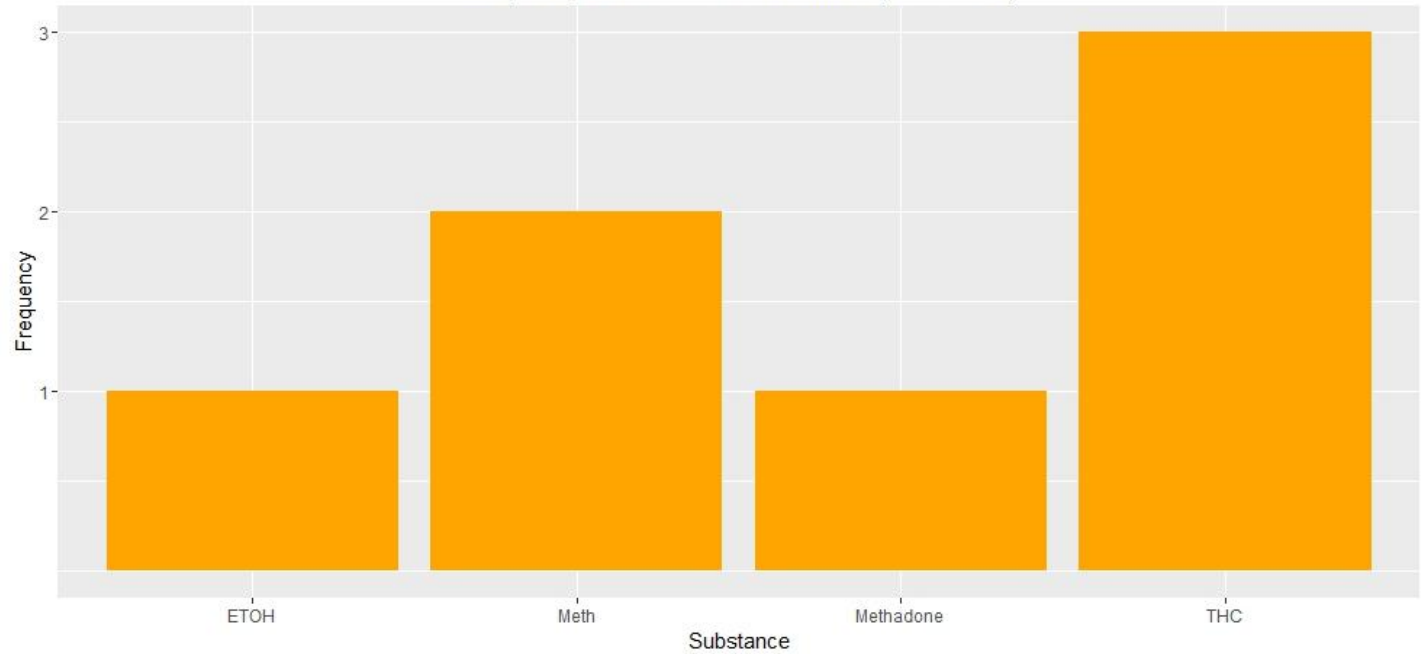
Female 31 Male 51

# Pinal County Motor Vehicle Deaths-Toxicology

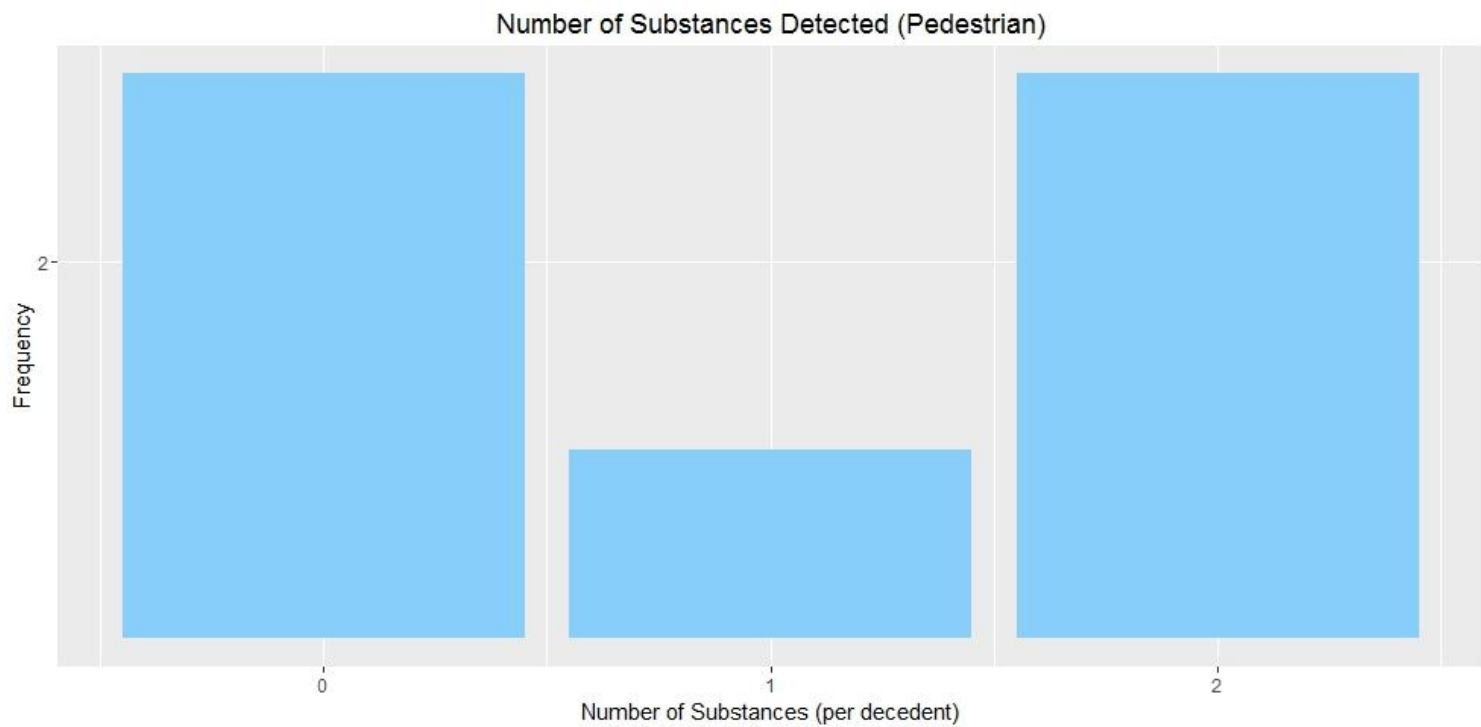
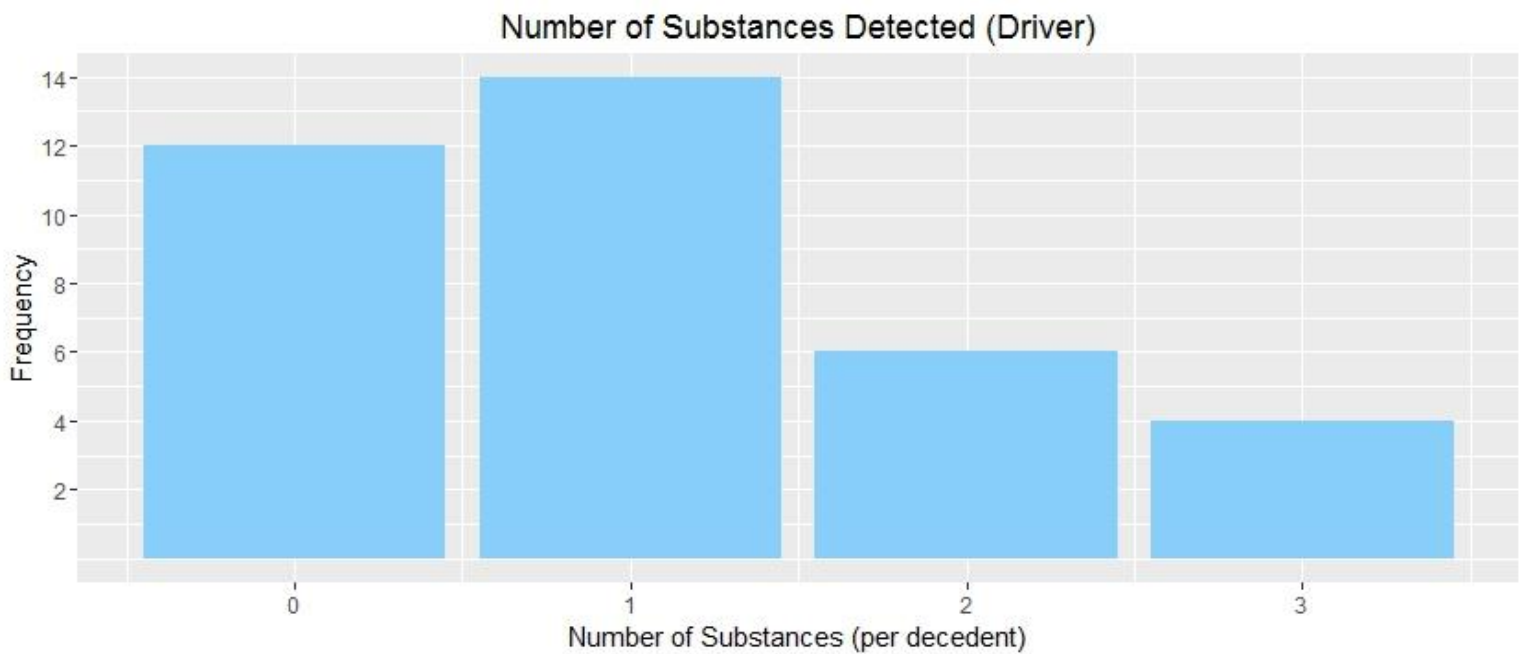
Frequency of Detected Substances (Driver)



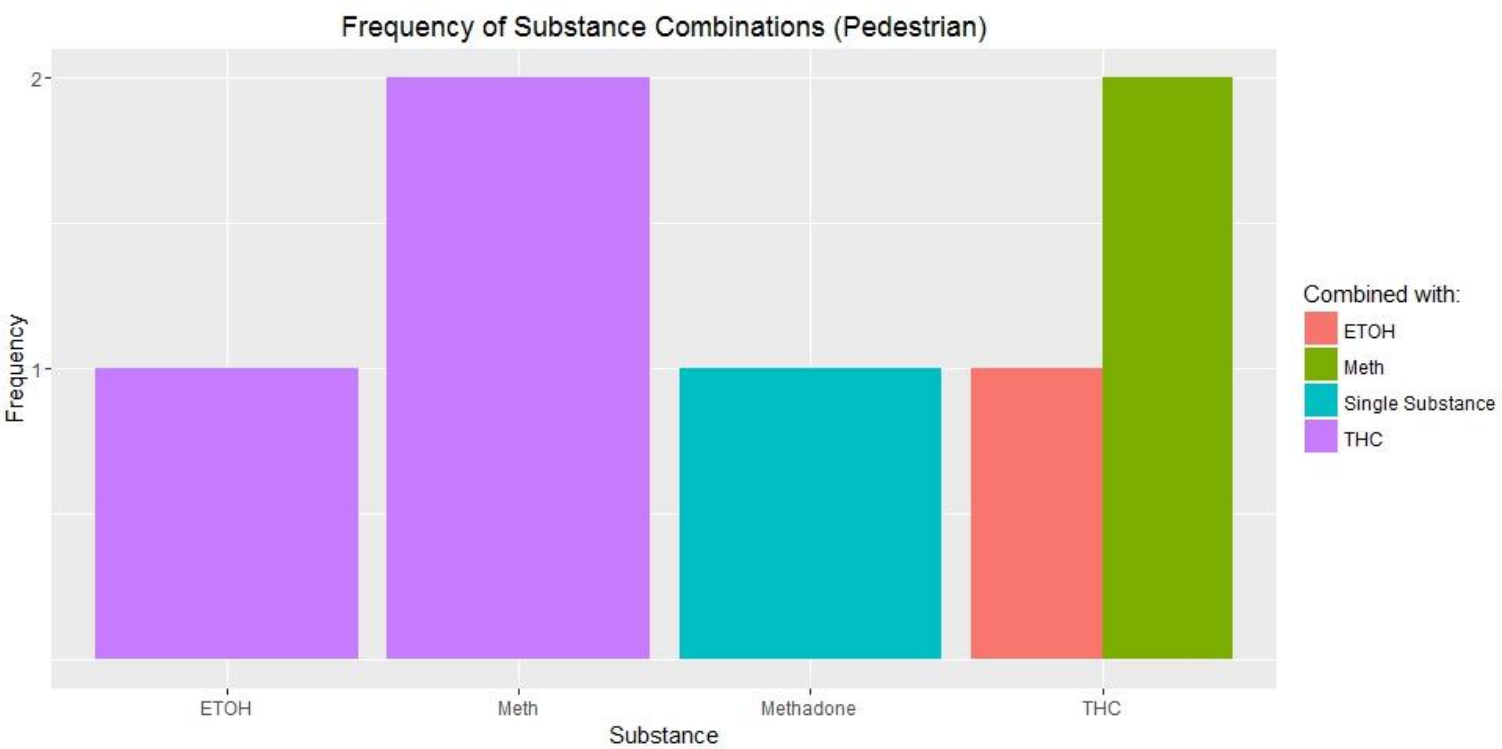
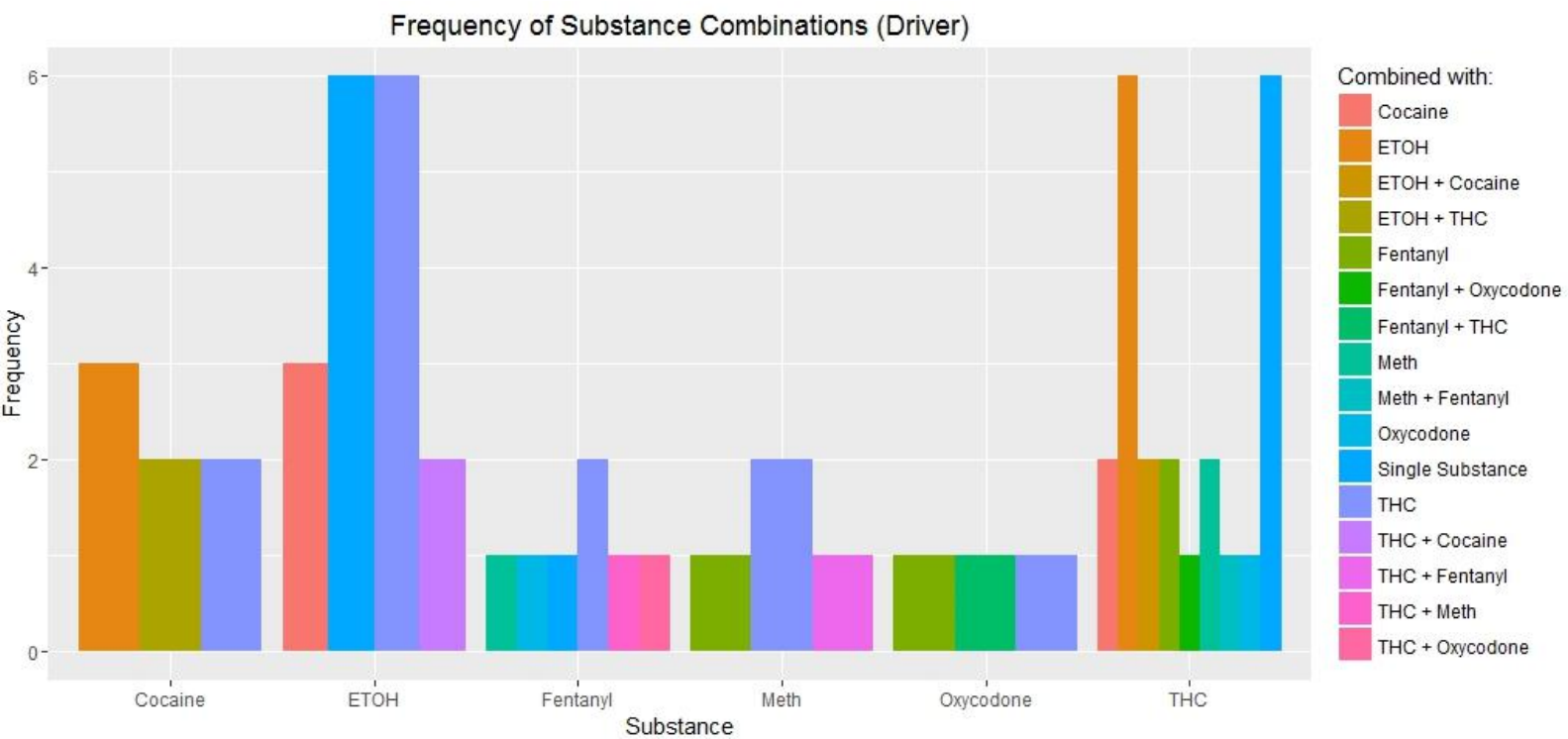
Frequency of Detected Substances (Pedestrian)



# Pinal County Motor Vehicle Deaths-Toxicology



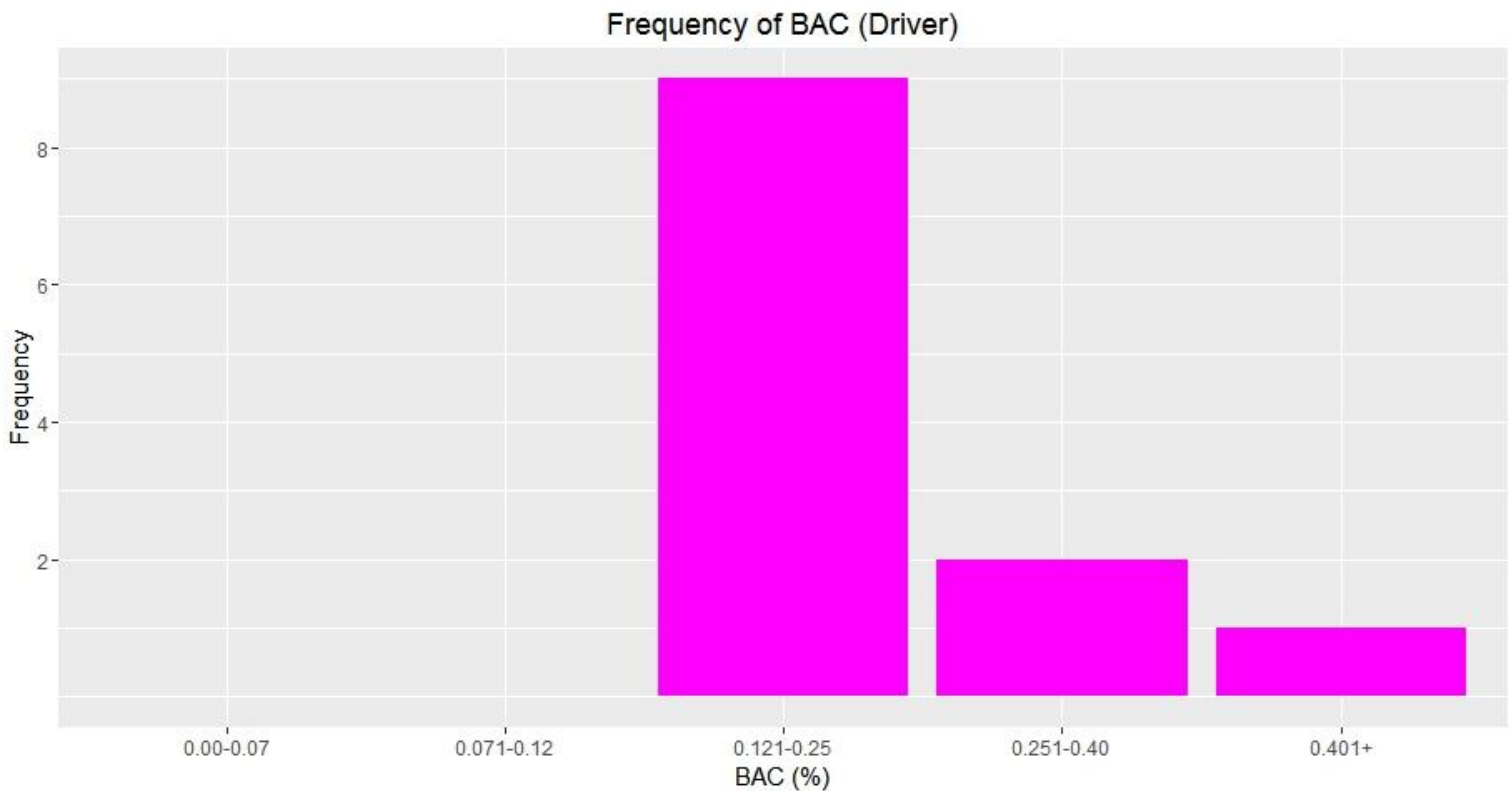
# Pinal County Motor Vehicle Deaths-Toxicology



# Pinal County Motor Vehicle Deaths- Toxicology

Per the Arizona Department of Public Safety, in Arizona, if you are 21-years-old or above, you can receive a DUI charge if your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is above .08% (commercial vehicle- .04%, under 21- 0.00%).

In 2022, the BAC of twelve (12) decedents who were driving under the influence was between 0.121%- 0.401%+.



# Drug and Medication Related Deaths



# Pinal County Drug-Related Deaths-Overview

The Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office has experienced a significant increase in drug-related deaths from 2017-2021:

- 2017-2018 (10.2% increase)
- 2018-2019 (75.9% increase)
- 2019-2020 (43.1% increase)
- 2020-2021 (1.5% increase)
- 2021-2022 (25.4% decrease)

**1400%** Increase in Pinal County fentanyl deaths  
from 2017-2021

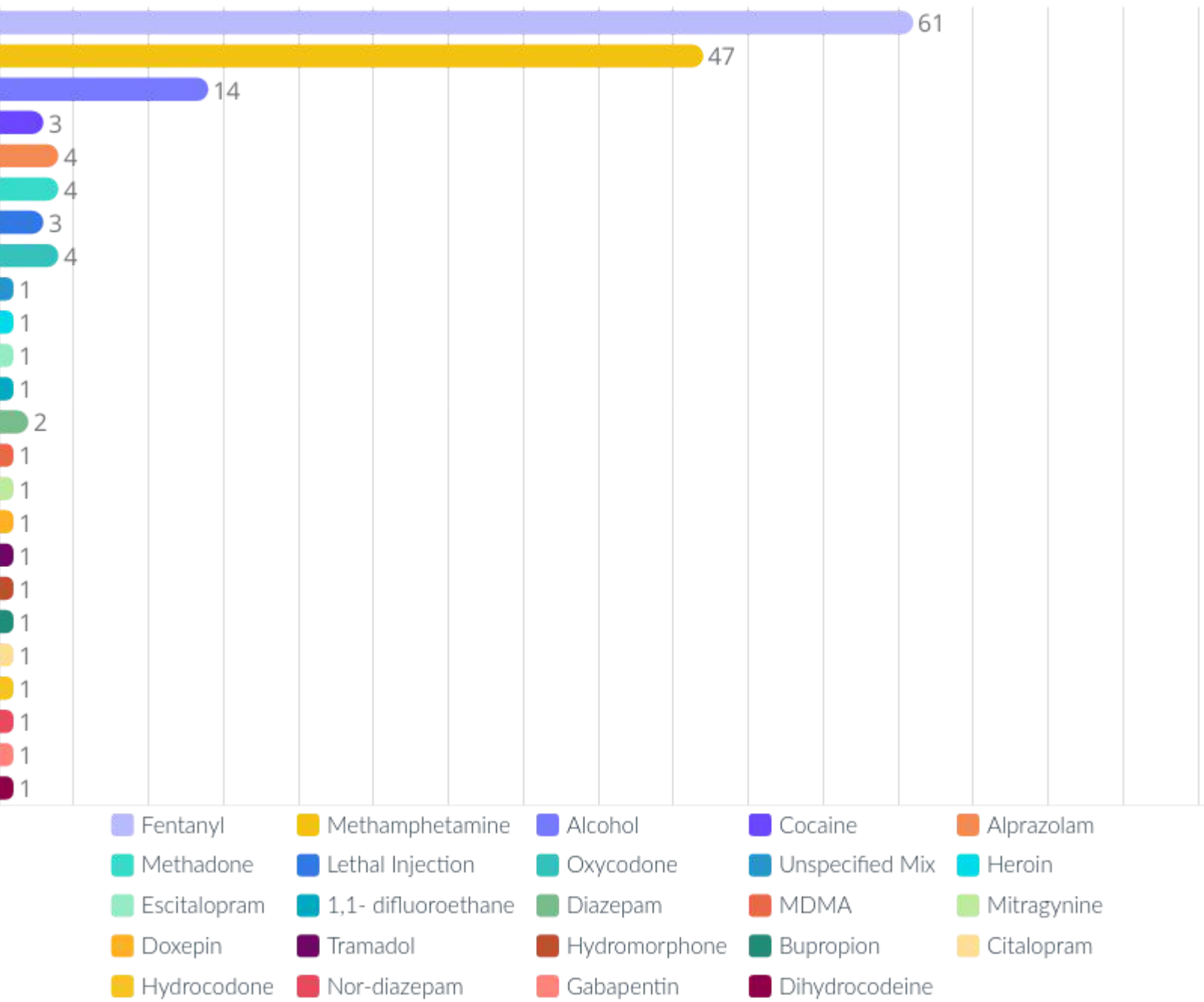
In addition to the increasing number of drug-related deaths reported to the PCMEO, the commonality of the fatal substances themselves has evolved since 2017. In 2021, opioids (mainly fentanyl) surpassed methamphetamine as the most common substance returned by toxicological analysis for suspected acute intoxication cases for the first time in the history of the PCMEO. A review of the PCMEO caseload has revealed a 1700% increase in fentanyl-related deaths since 2017.

Demographic analysis has revealed that white (non-Hispanic) males, with a mean age of 42.89 years, are the most likely to die due to acute substance toxicity in Pinal County. Considering fentanyl deaths exclusively, white (non-Hispanic) males with a mean age of 35.2 were the most likely to die of acute fentanyl toxicity.

# Pinal County Drug-Related Deaths-2022

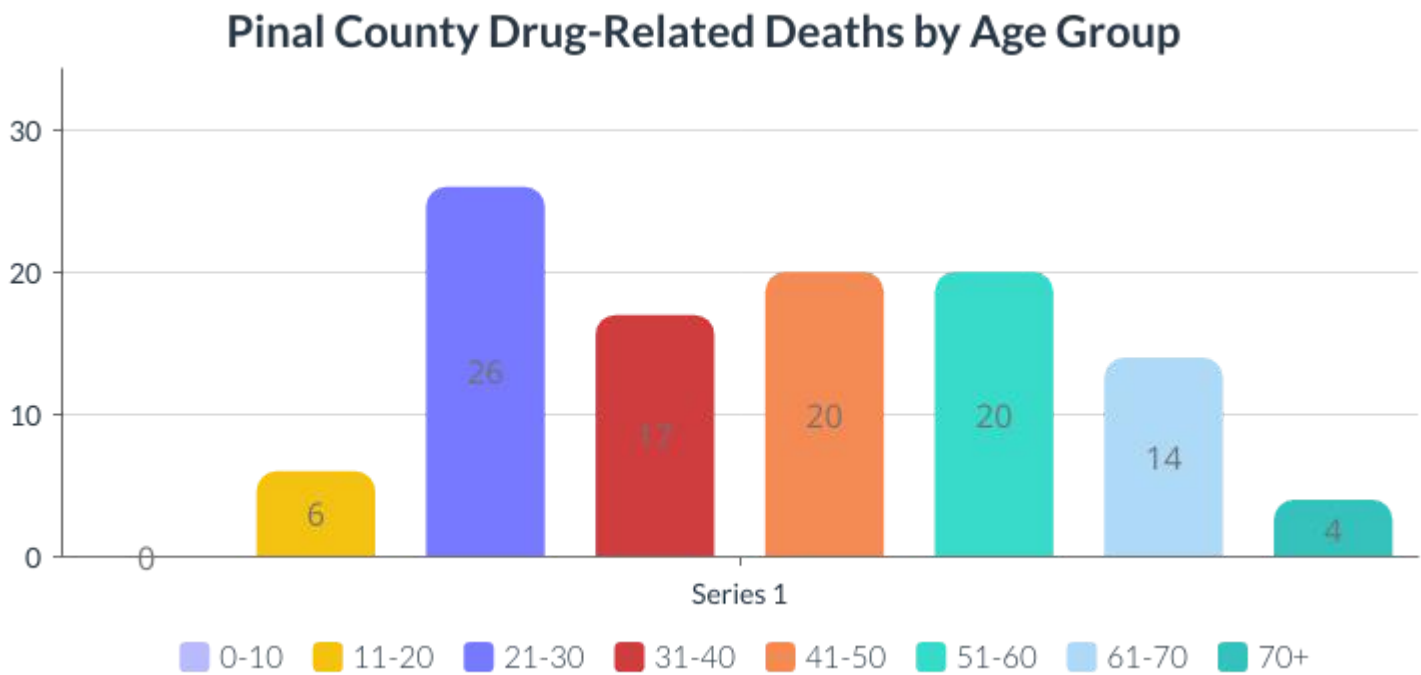
One hundred and seven (107) drug-related deaths were reported to and investigated by the PCMEO in 2022. Of the 107 deaths, 91.2% of drug-related deaths were determined to be accidental.

Substances by Frequency of Appearance on Death Certificates Certified by the PCMEO

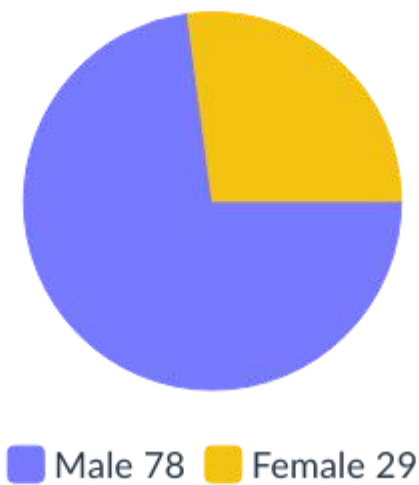


# Pinal County Drug-Related Deaths- Demographics

White (non-Hispanic) males between the ages of 21-30 years of age comprised the greatest number of drug-related deaths in Pinal County in 2022.

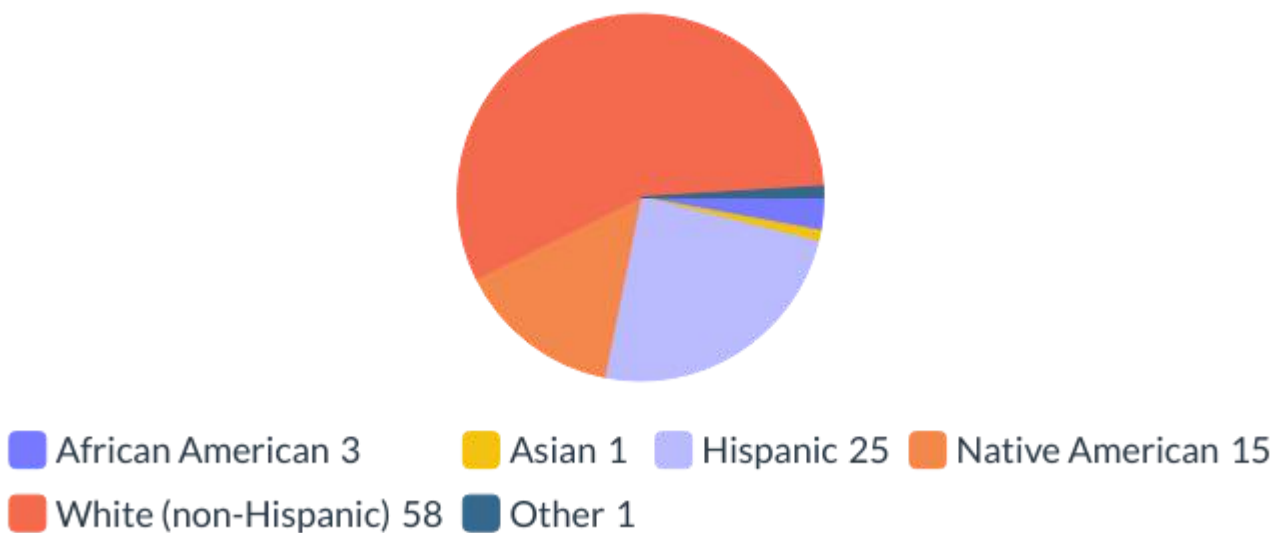


**Pinal County Drug-Related Deaths by Sex**

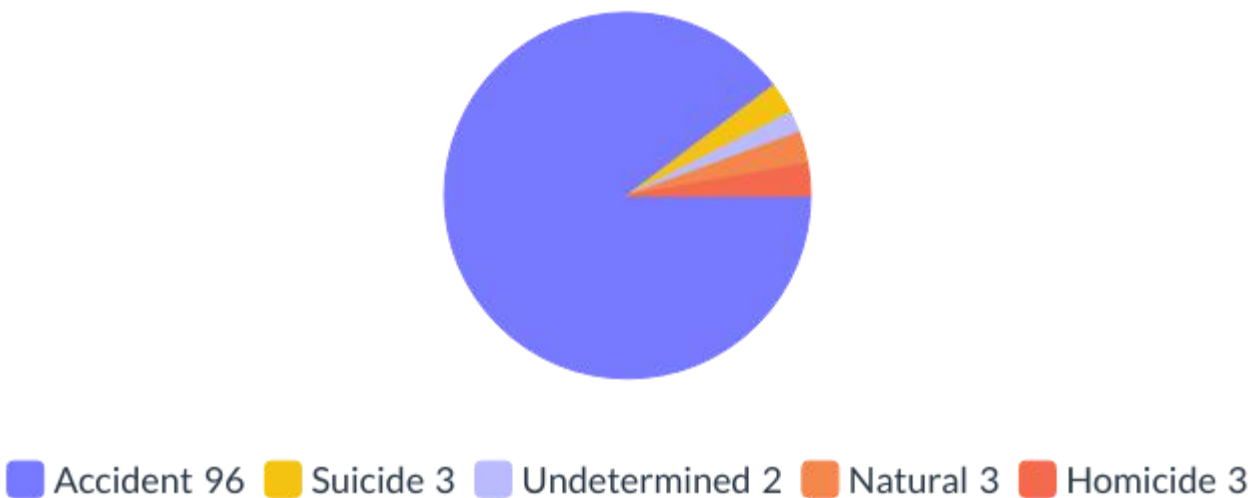


# Pinal County Drug-Related Deaths- Demographics

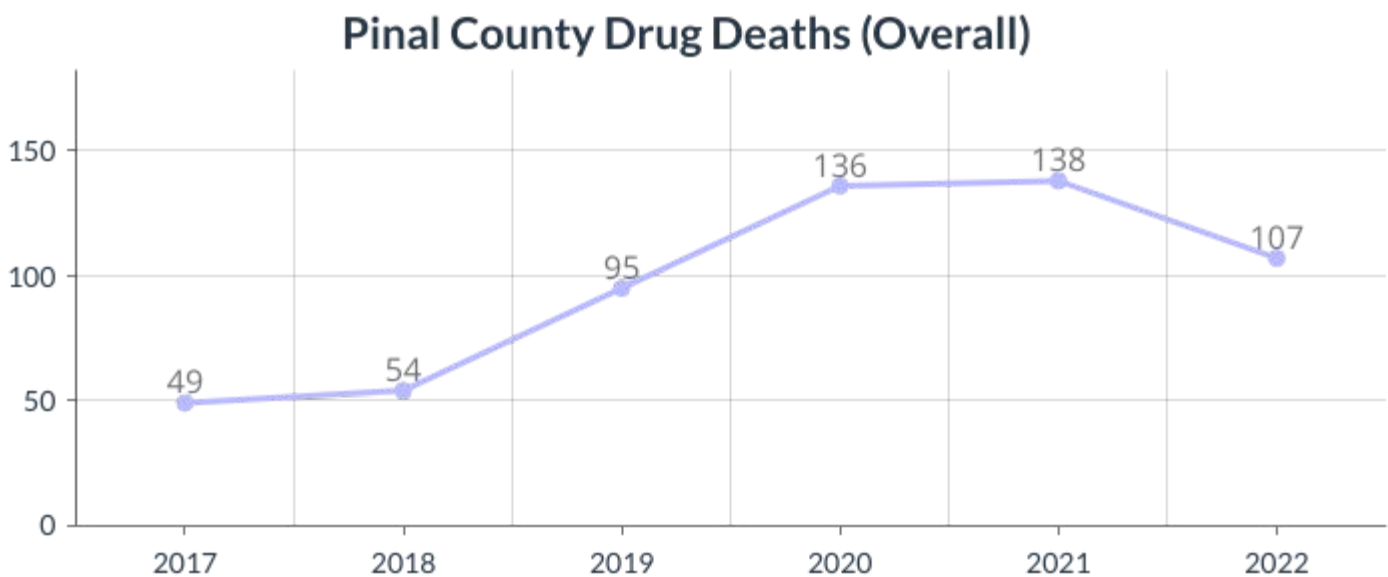
Pinal County Drug-Related Deaths by Race/Ehtnicity



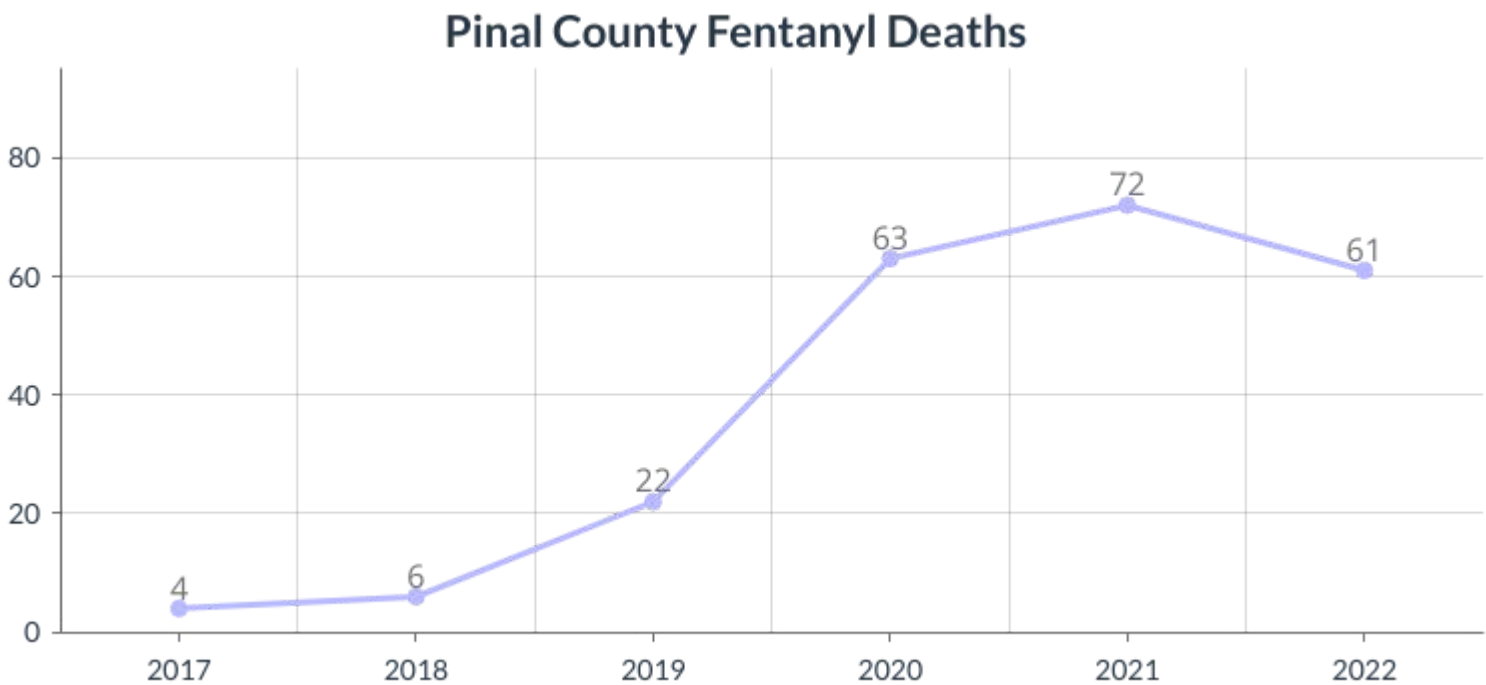
Drug-Related Deaths by Manner of Death



# Pinal County Drug-Related Deaths-Trends



Of the five hundred seventy-five (575) drug-related deaths investigated by the PCMEO since 2017, one hundred six (106) or 18.5% were determined to be exclusively the result of fentanyl toxicity following toxicological analysis. One hundred twenty (120) cases, or 21% were determined to result from polysubstance toxicity (including fentanyl). Combined, deaths resulting from fentanyl toxicity (either monosubstance or polysubstance) have accounted for 39.5% of the PCMEO’s drug-related death cases since 2017.



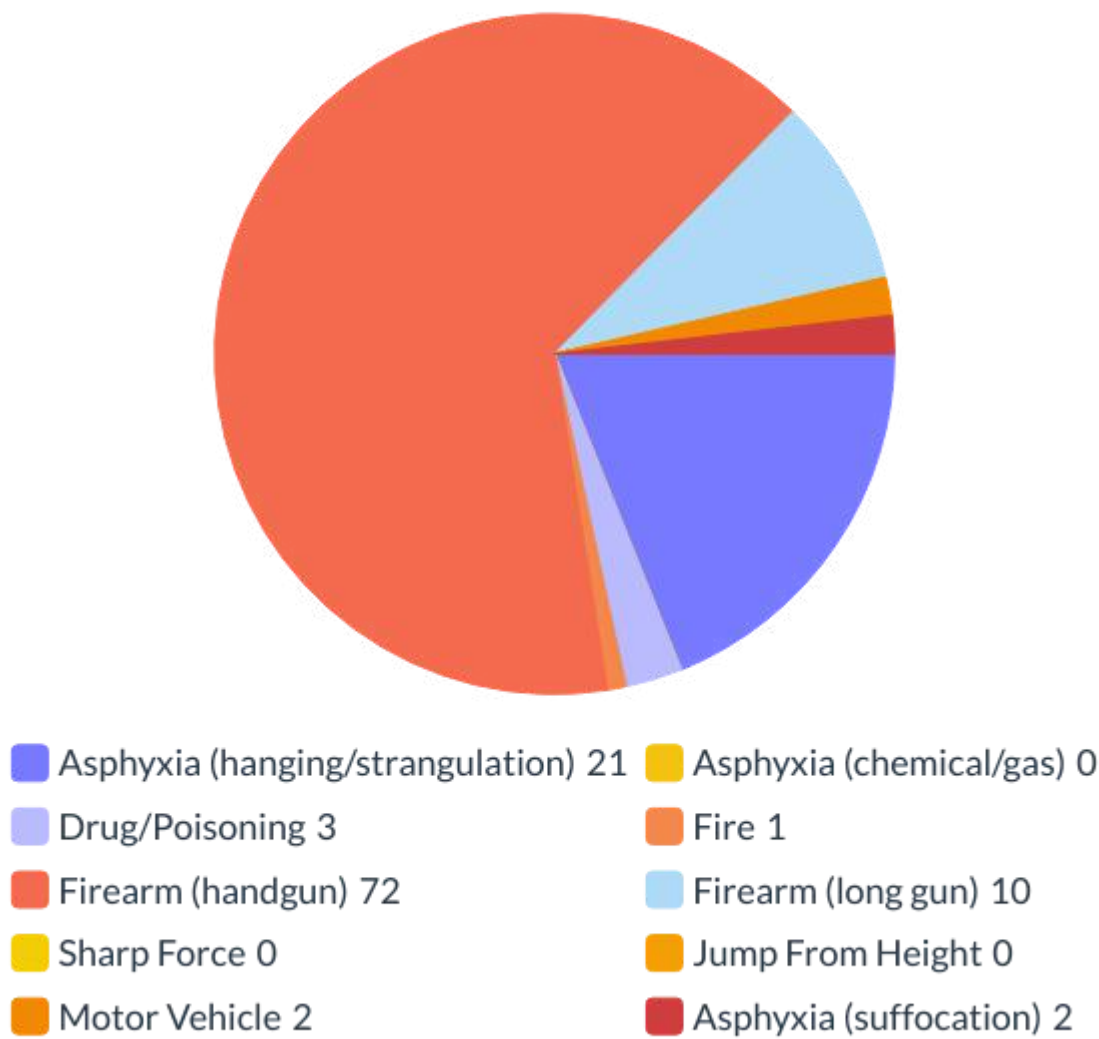
# Suicide Deaths



# Suicide Deaths Overview

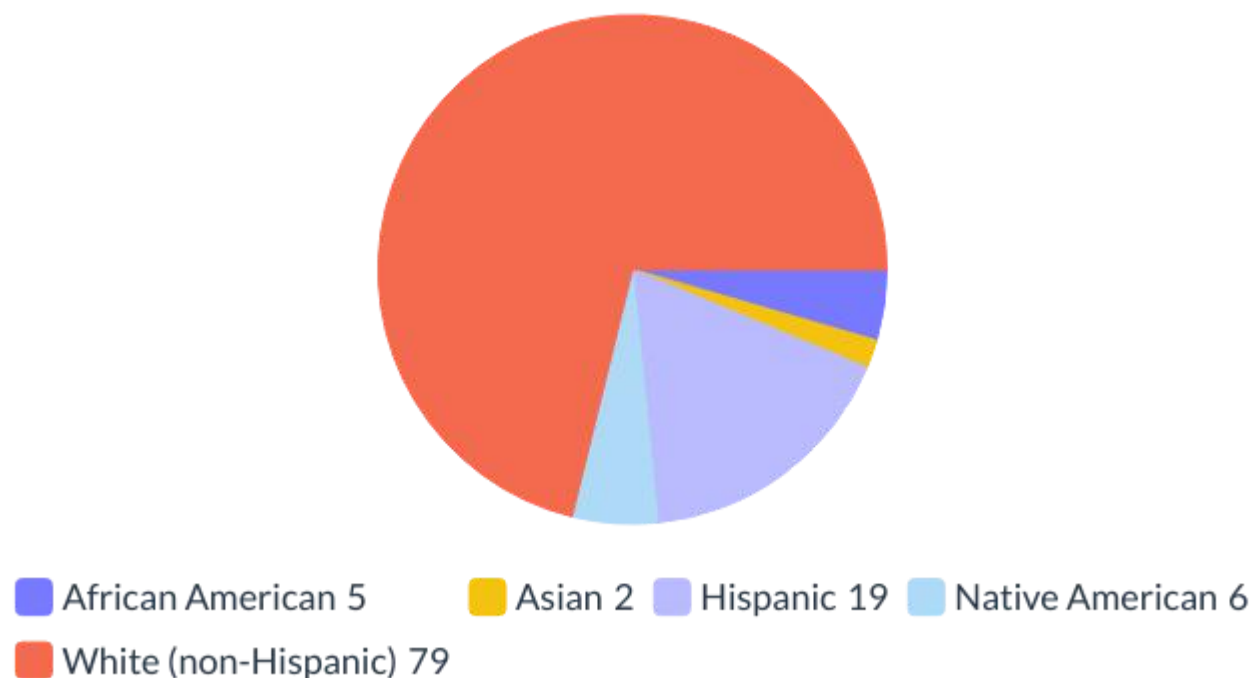
A total of one-hundred eleven (111) Pinal County deaths that were determined to be the result of SUICIDE were reported to and investigated by the PCMEO in 2022. Deliberately self-inflicted firearm injuries accounted for the vast majority of Pinal County suicide deaths.

Pinal County Suicide Deaths by Mechanism



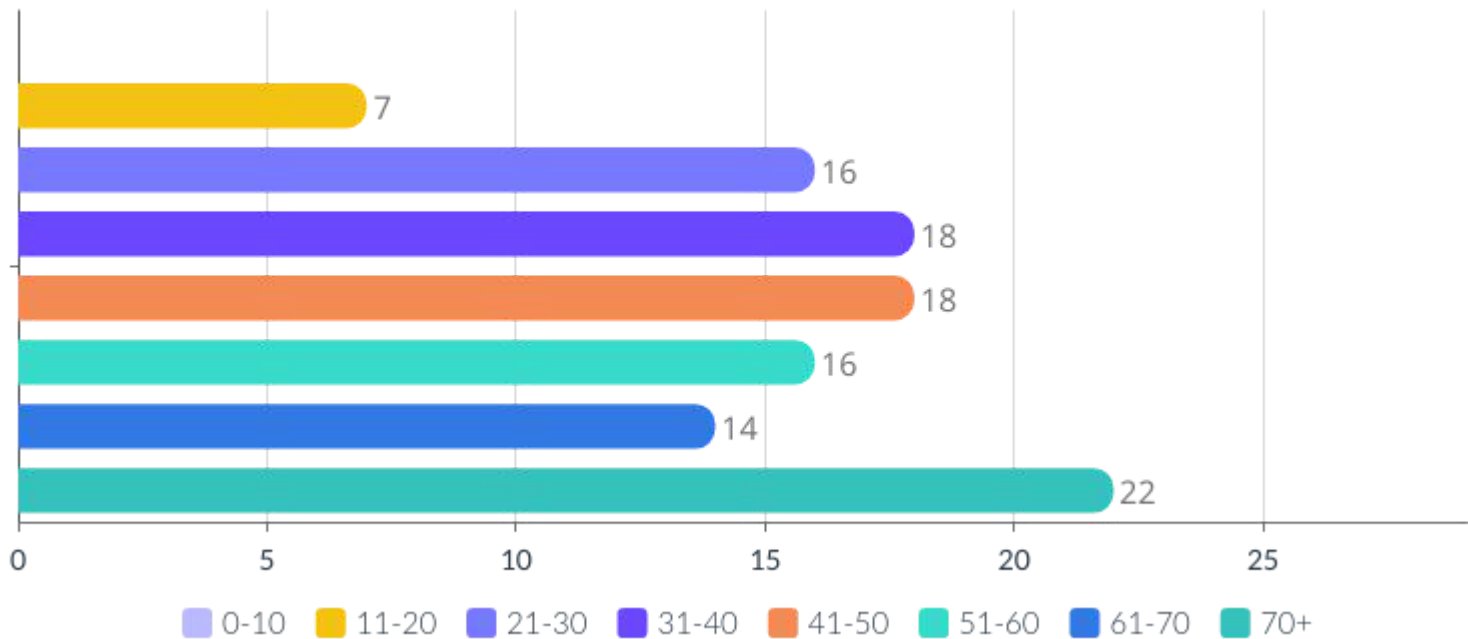
# Suicide Deaths Demographics

Pinal County Suicide Deaths by Race/Ethnicity



White (non-Hispanic) males 70+ years of age comprised the greatest number of Pinal County suicide deaths in 2022.

Pinal County Suicide Deaths by Age Group



# Suicide Deaths Demographics

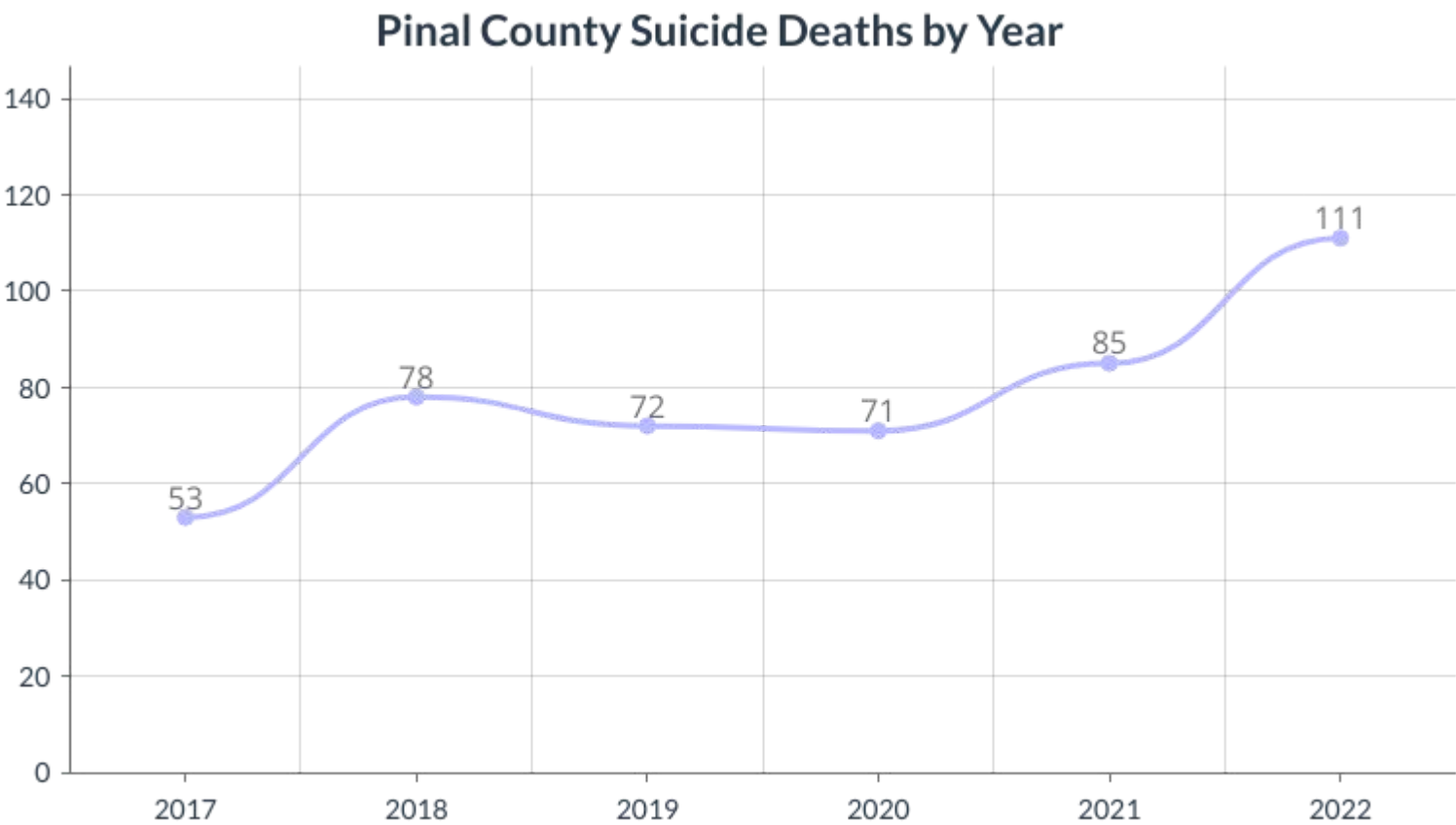
Pinal County Suicide Deaths by Sex



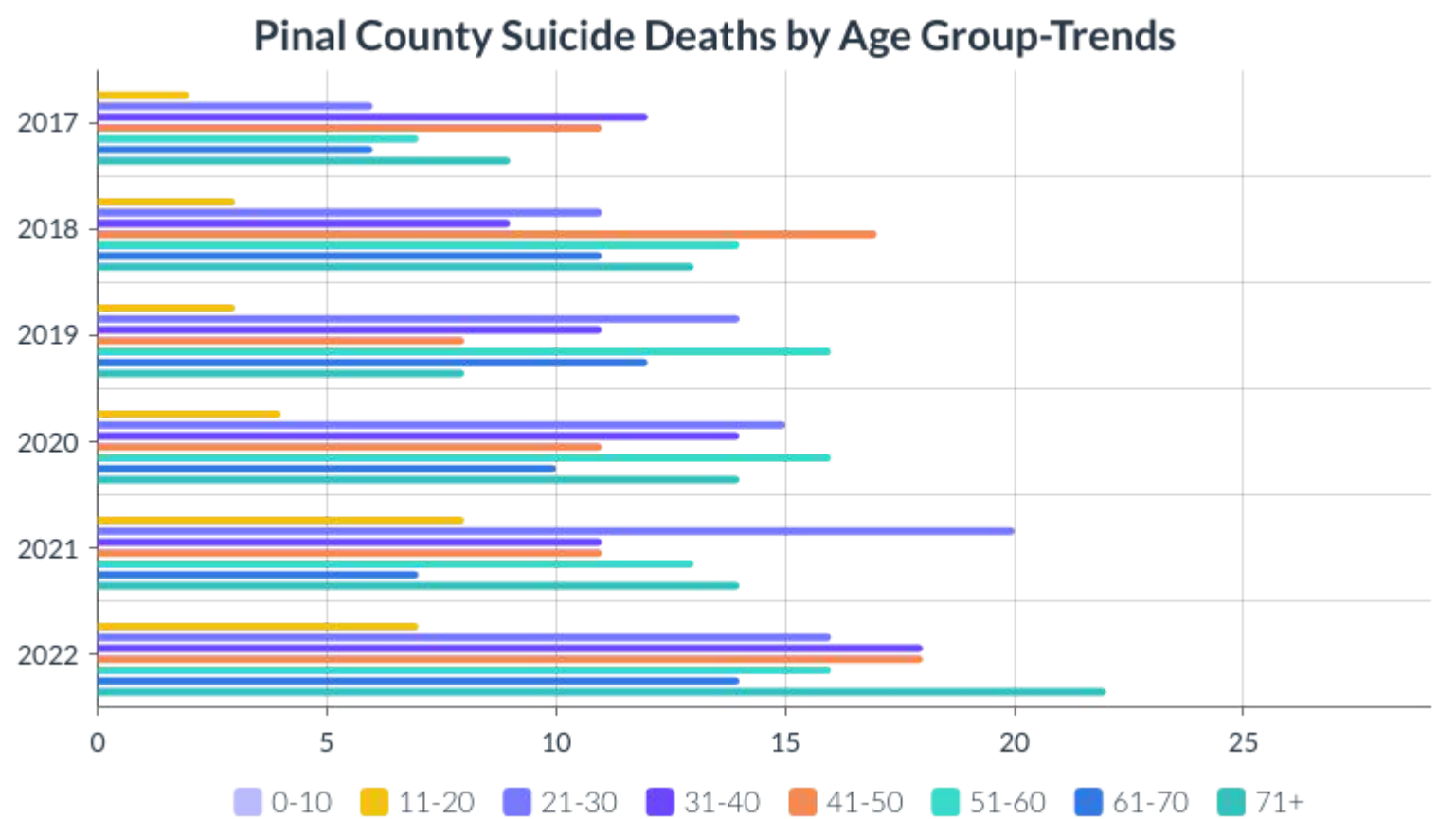
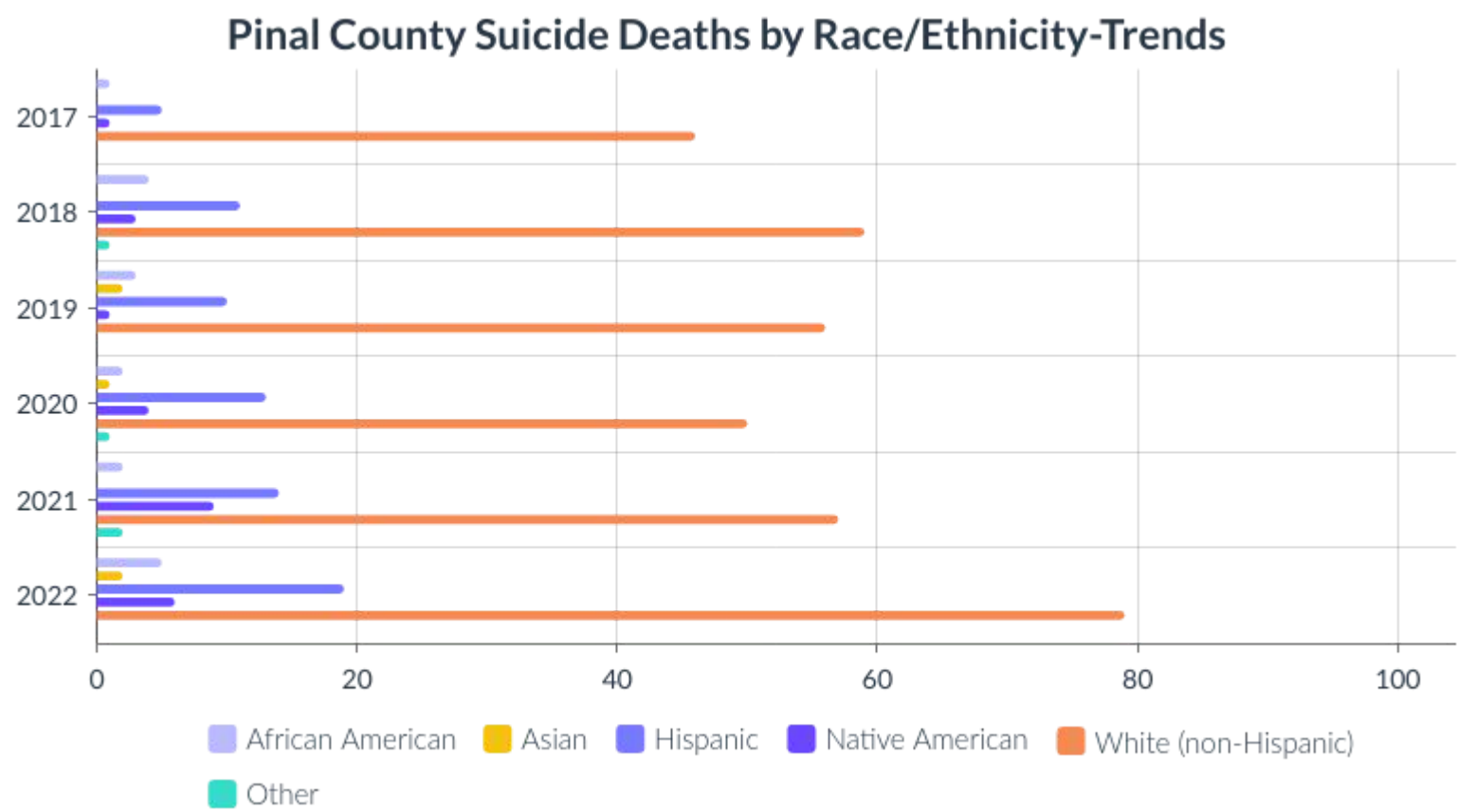
Male 91 Female 20

# Suicide Deaths Trends

Pinal County suicide deaths have increased 109% from 2017 and 30.6% from 2021.



# Suicide Deaths Demographic Trends



# Veteran Suicide Deaths



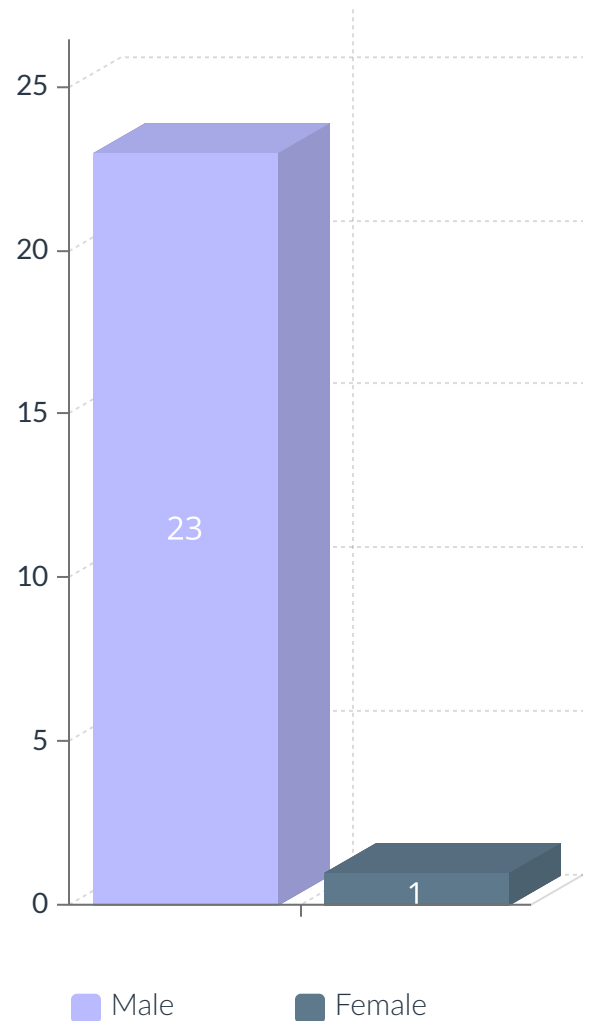
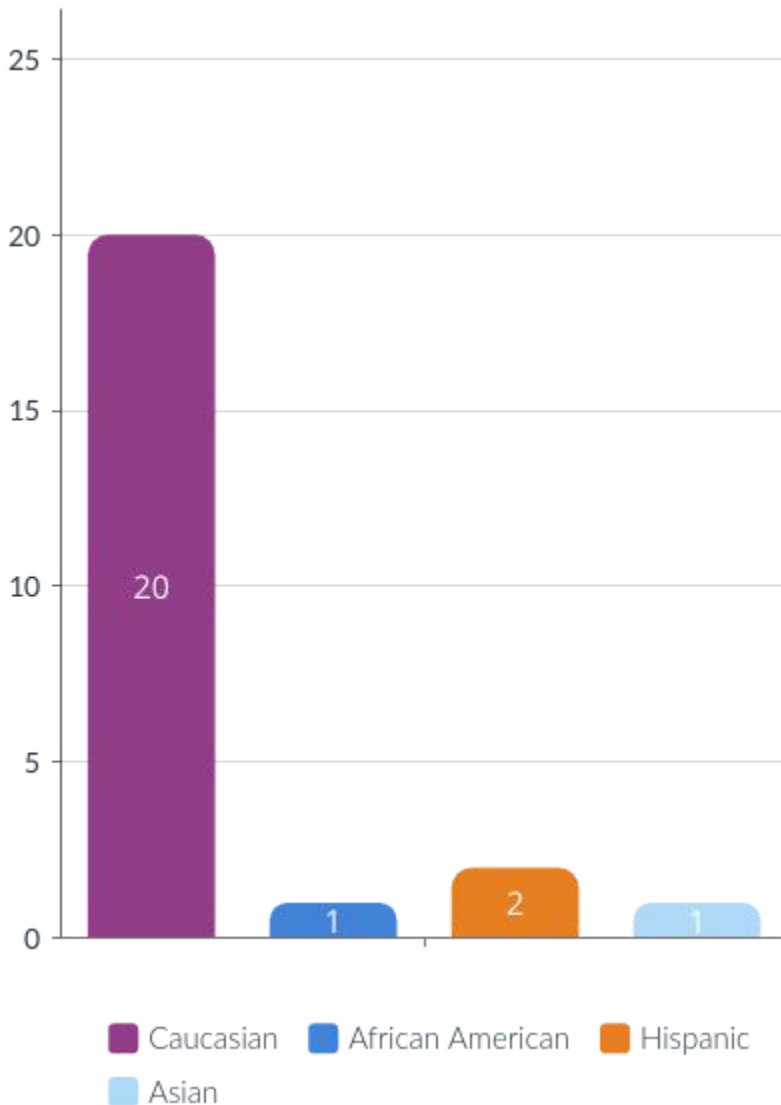
# Veteran Suicide Deaths

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report (2019), the suicide rate among Veterans is 1.5 times greater than the non-Veteran population ages 18 and older. Despite accounting for just 7.9% of the population, Veterans account for 13.5% of all suicide deaths in the United States.

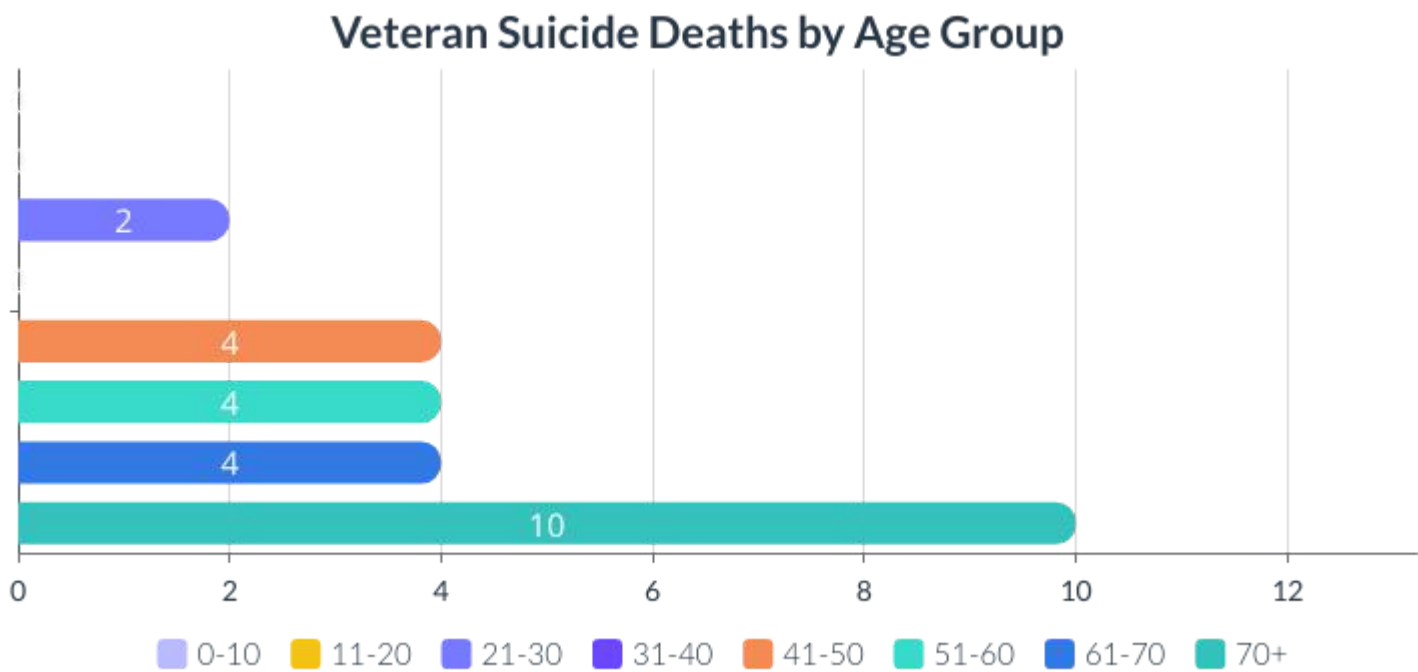
In 2022, PCMEO investigated the deaths of eighty-two (82) veterans residing in Pinal and Gila Counties. A total of twenty-four (24) or 29.3% of veteran deaths in Pinal County were determined to be the result of SUICIDE.

Please note the veteran status is not known for all decedents.

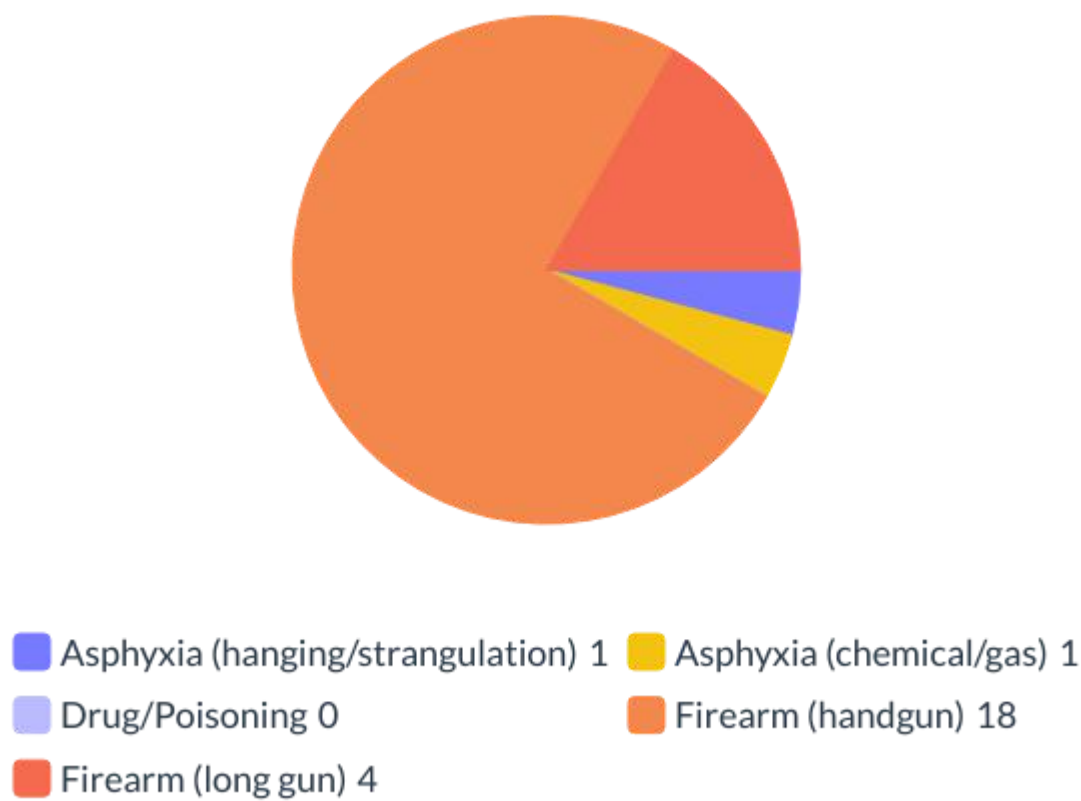
## 2022 Pinal County Veteran Suicide Demographics



# Veteran Suicide Deaths



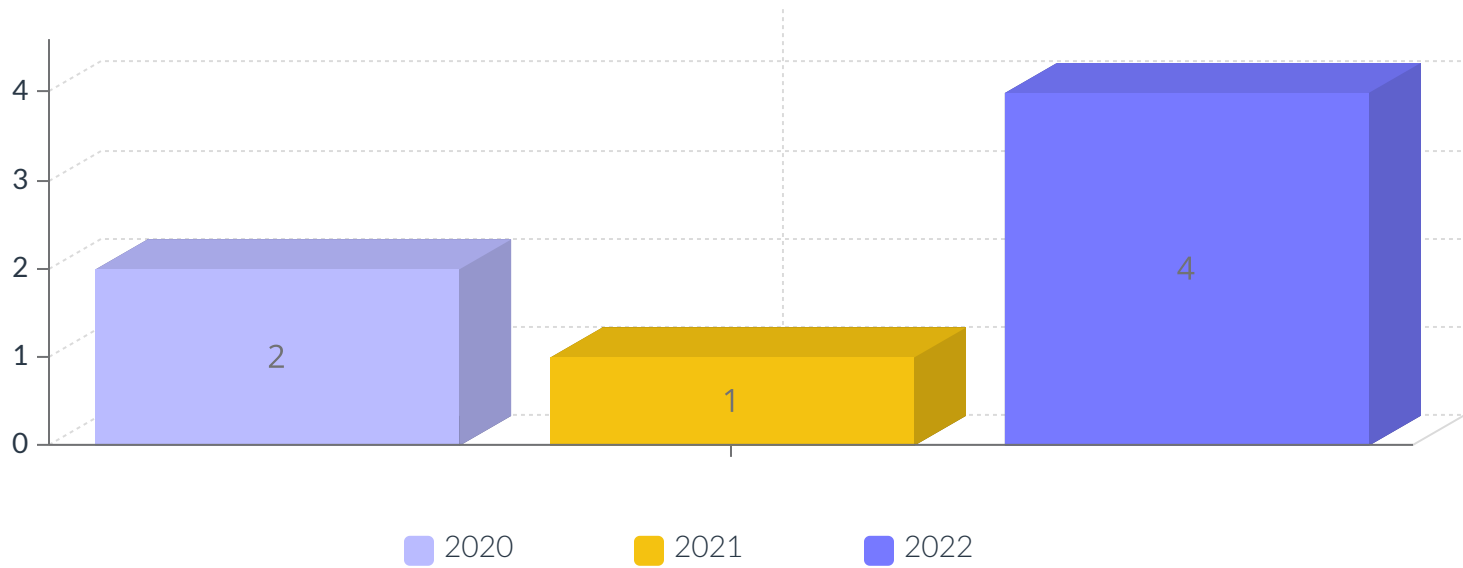
**Veteran Suicide Deaths by Mechanism**



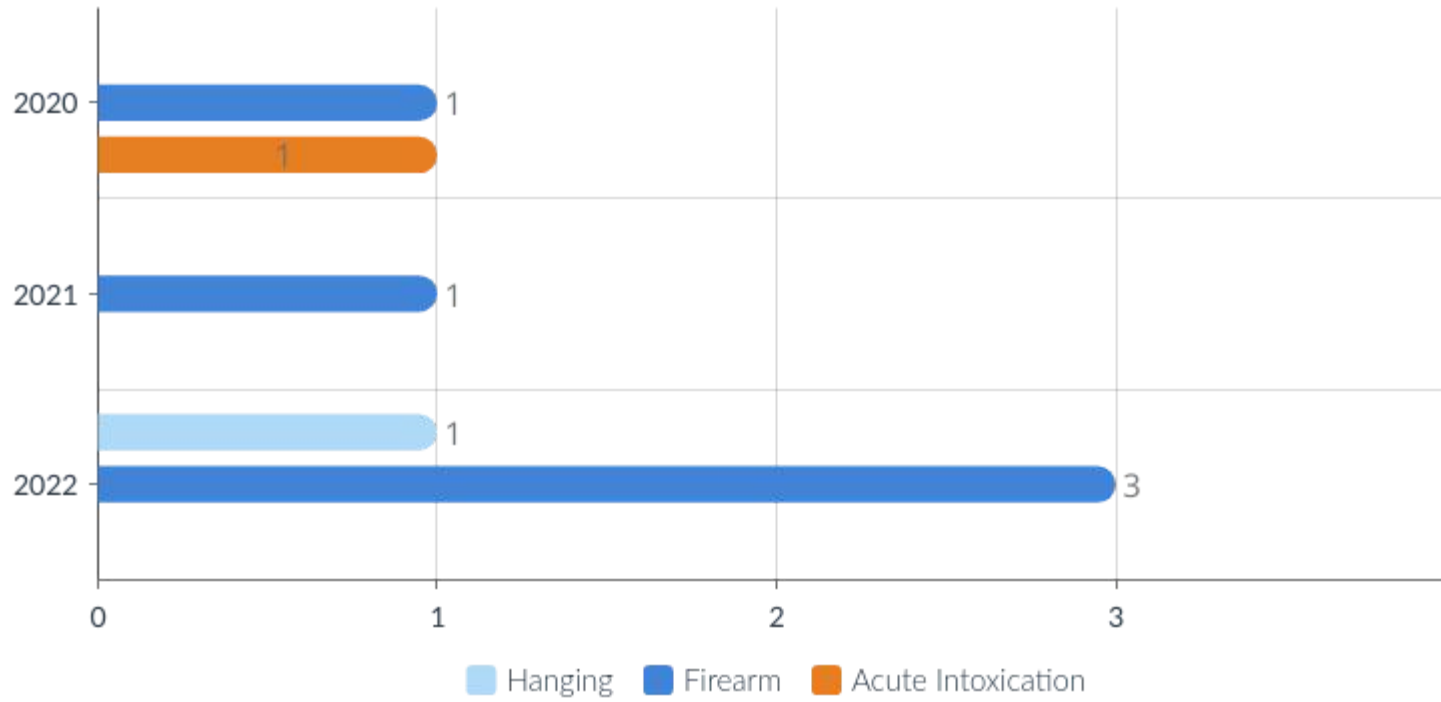
# Pediatric Suicide Deaths

In 2022, 4 children died from suicide, ages 12-17. The most frequent method was through the use of a firearm (75%) and hanging (25%)

Pediatric Suicides Per Year

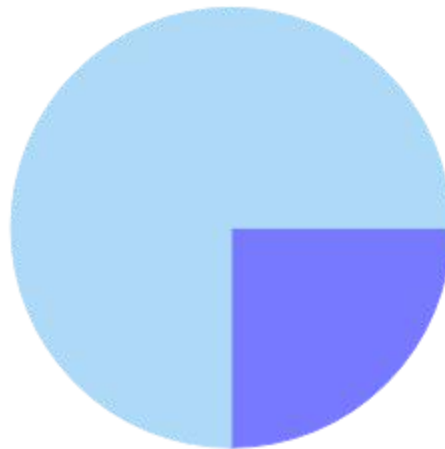


Pediatric Deaths by Mechanism



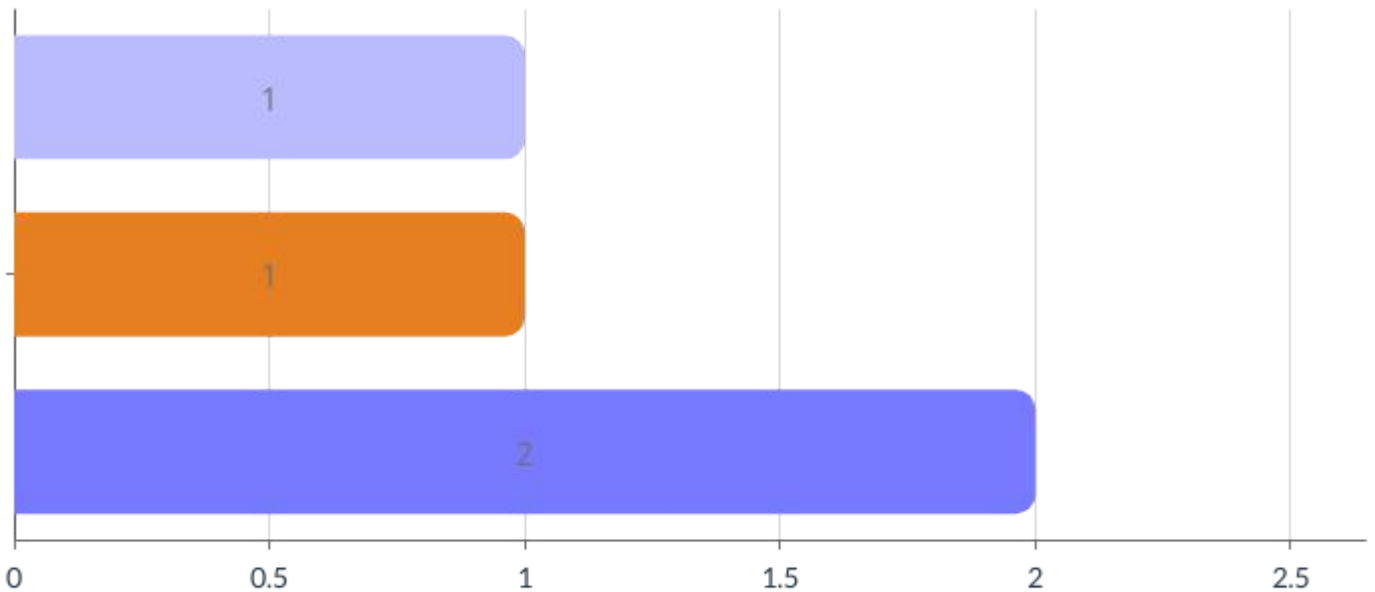
# Pediatric Suicide Deaths- Demographics

Pediatric Suicide Deaths by Sex



Male Female

Pediatric Suicide Deaths by Age



12 15 17

# Pinal County Homicide Deaths

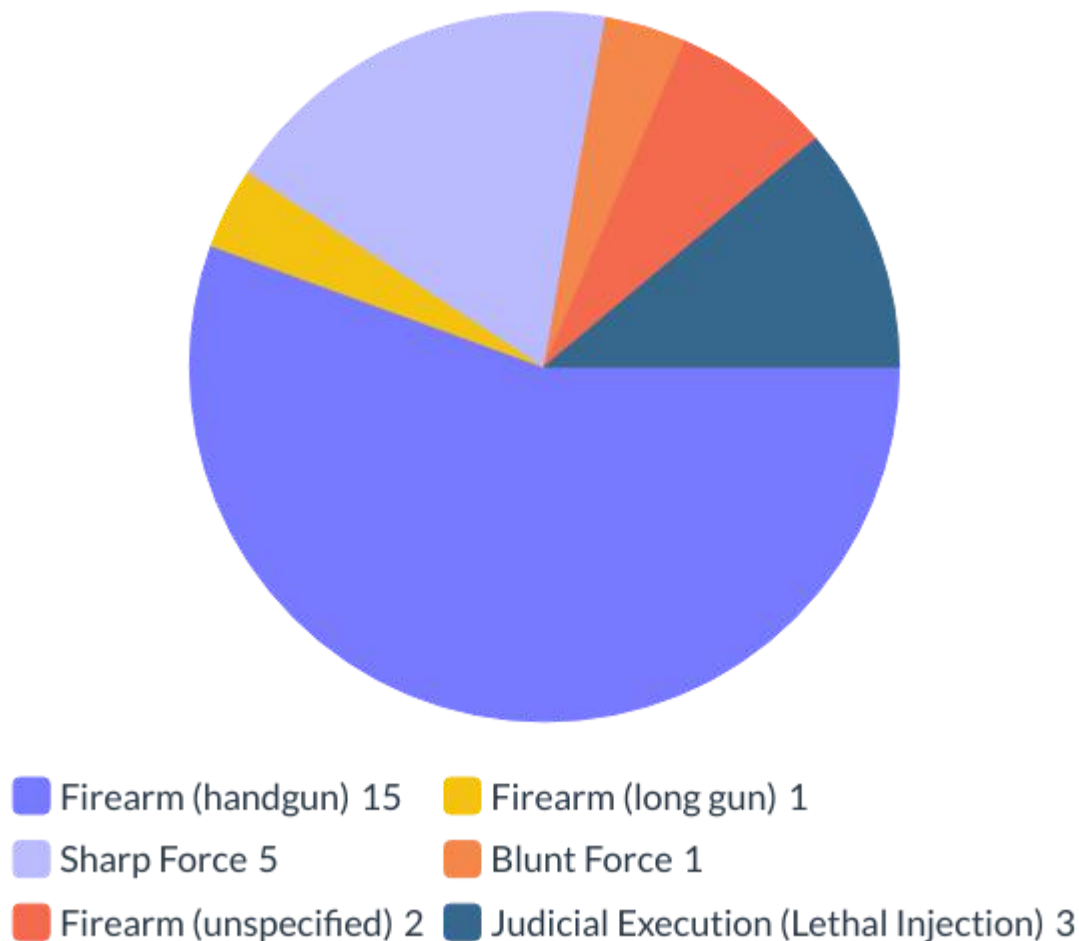


# Homicide Deaths

Twenty-seven (27) Pinal County cases that were determined to be homicides were reported to and investigated by the Pinal County Medical Examiner's Office in 2022.

Three (3) homicide deaths were the result of judicial execution. The decedents were a 66-year-old Caucasian male, a 66-year-old American Indian male, and a 76-year-old African American male. The cause of death was determined to be judicial execution by lethal injection.

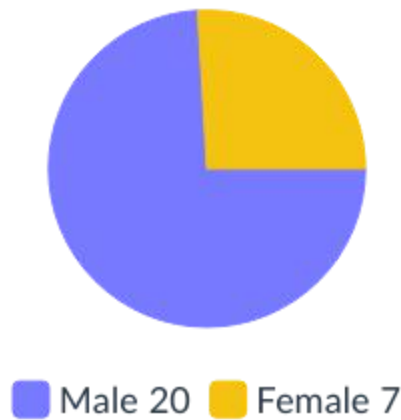
**Pinal County Homicide Deaths by Mechanism of Injury**



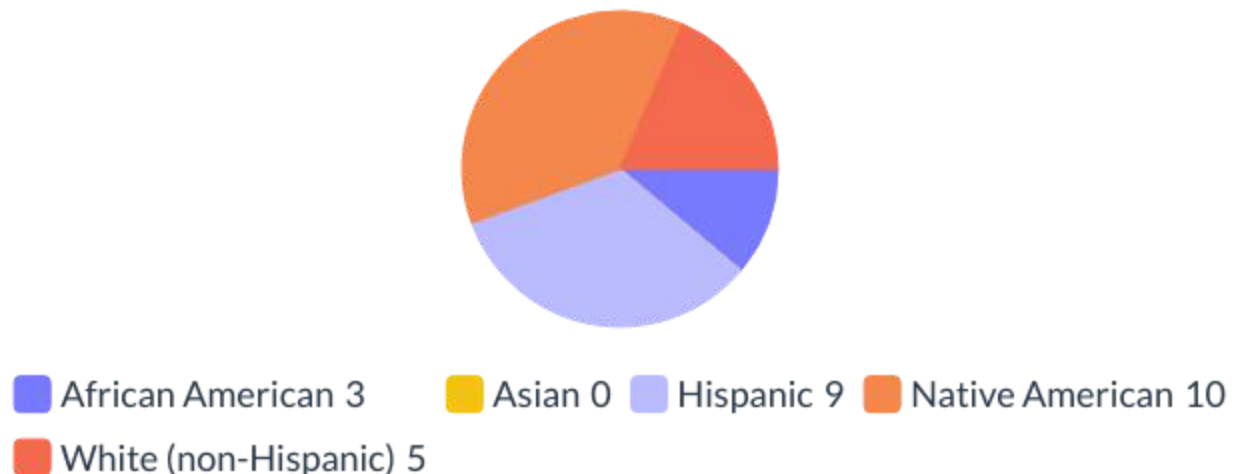
# Homicide Deaths- Demographics

Native American males between the ages of 31-40 years old were the majority of homicide deaths in Pinal County in 2022.

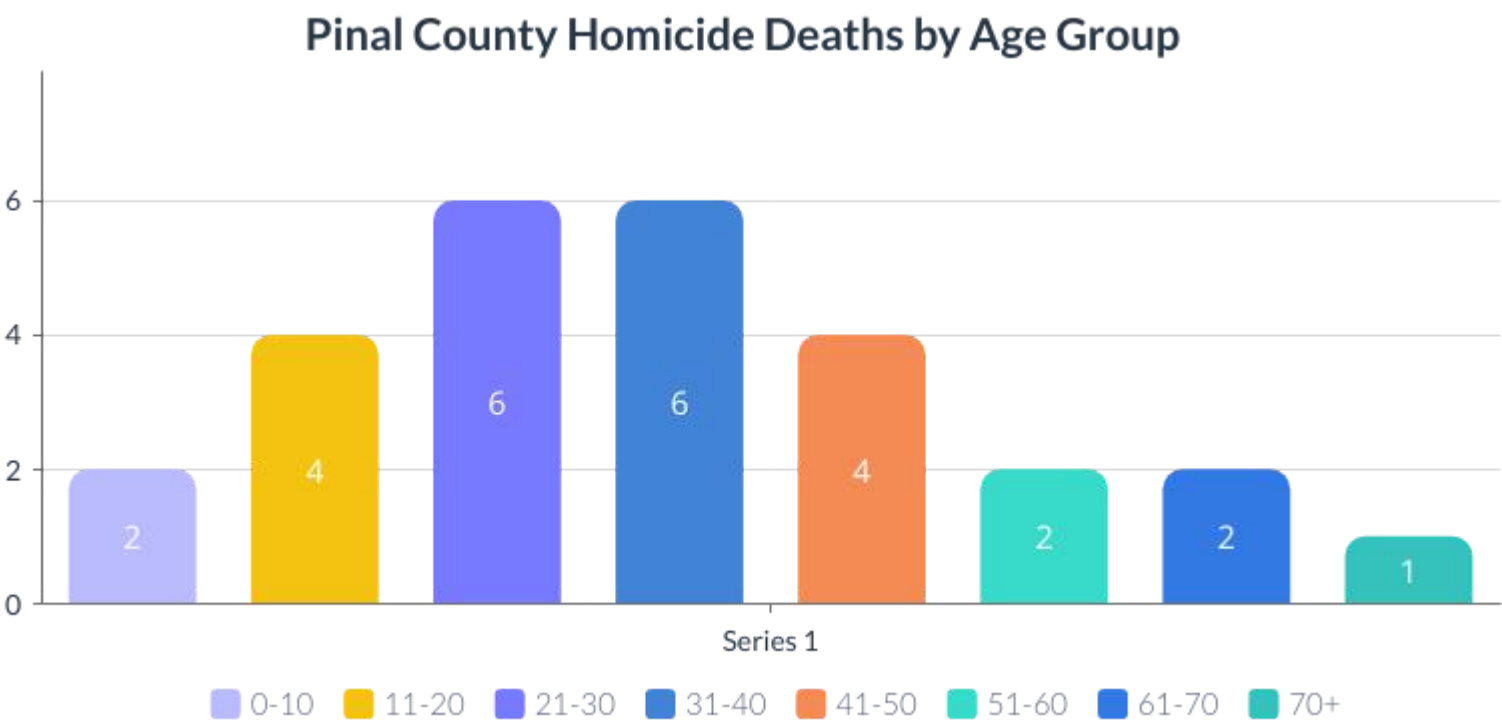
Pinal County Homicide Deaths by Sex



Pinal Couty Homicide Deaths by Race/Ehtnicity

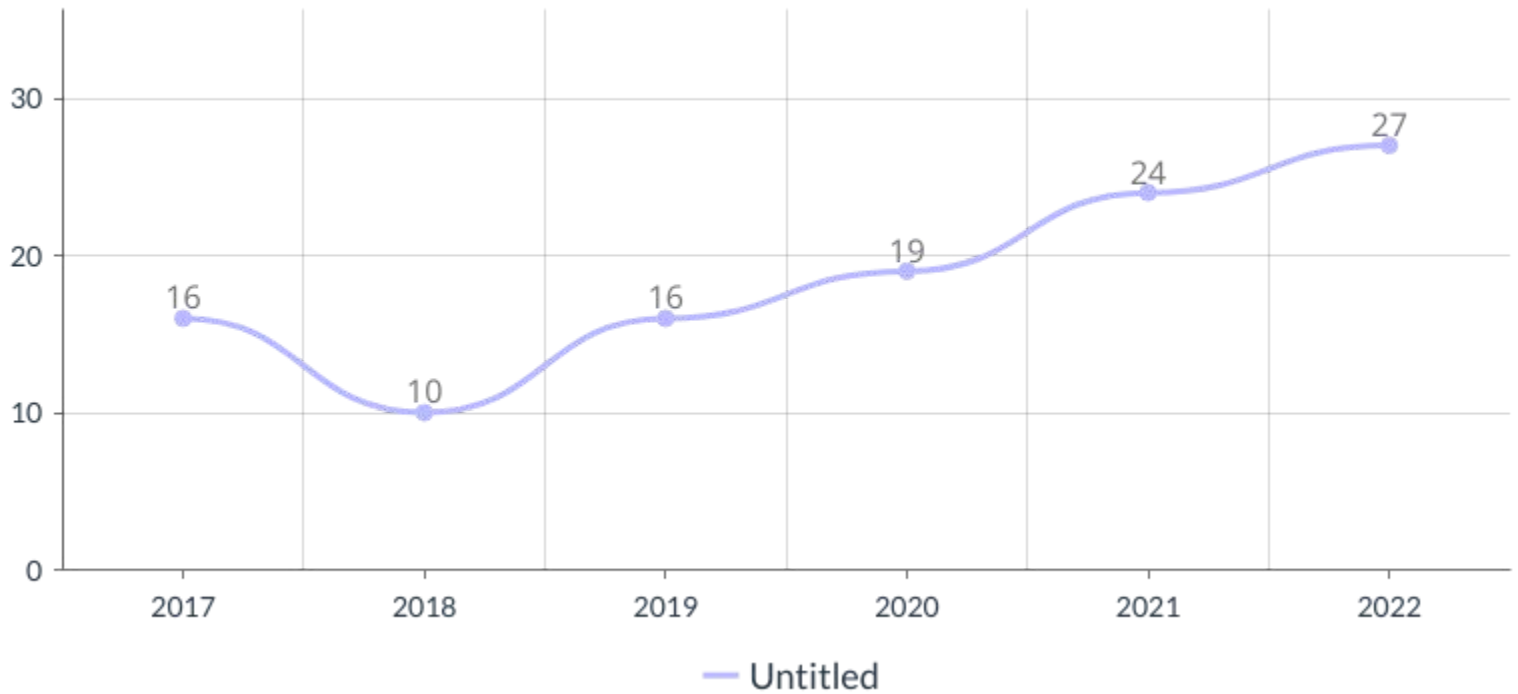


# Homicide Deaths- Demographics

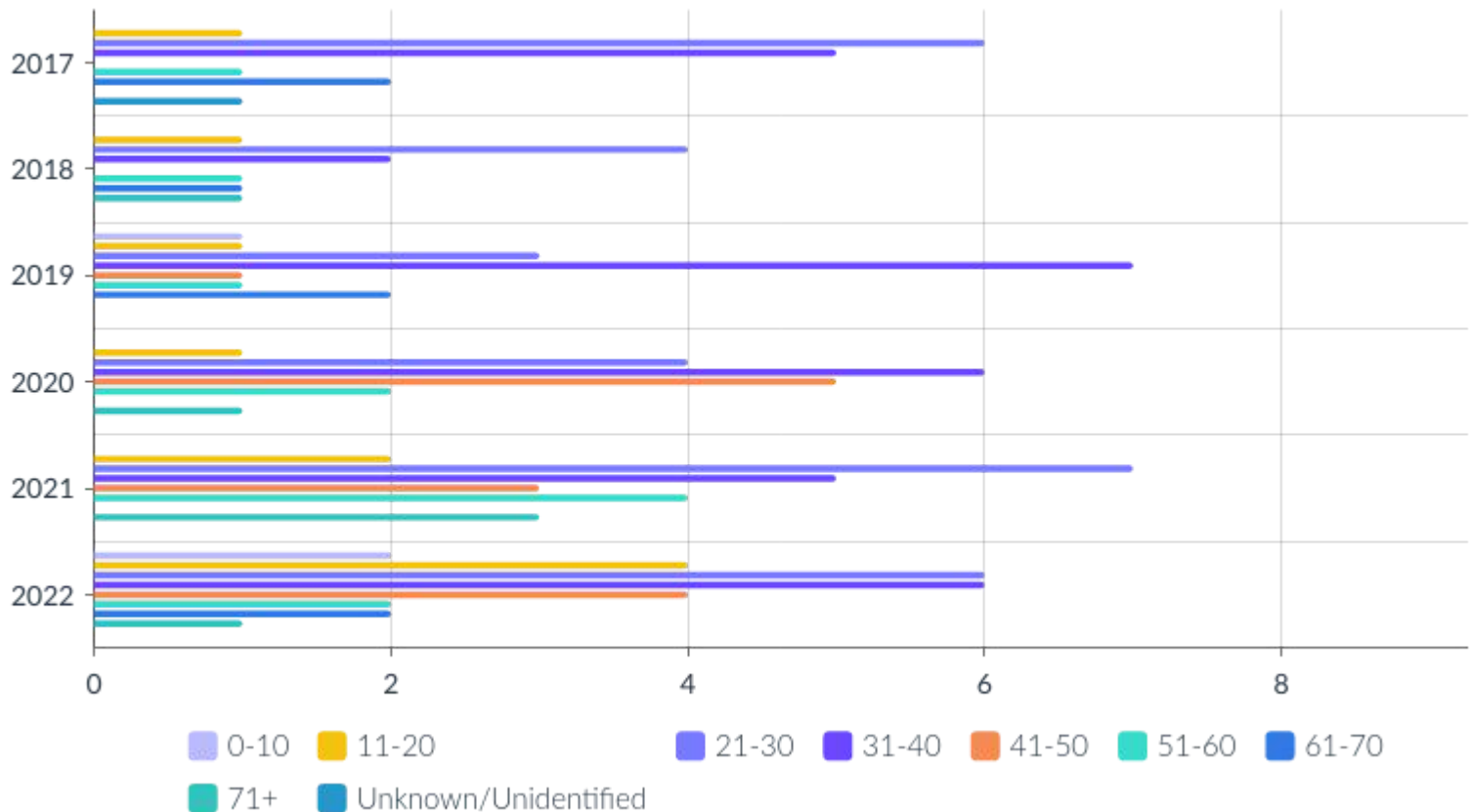


# Homicide Deaths-Trends

## Pinal County Homicide Deaths-Trends



## Pinal County Homicide Deaths by Age Group-Trends

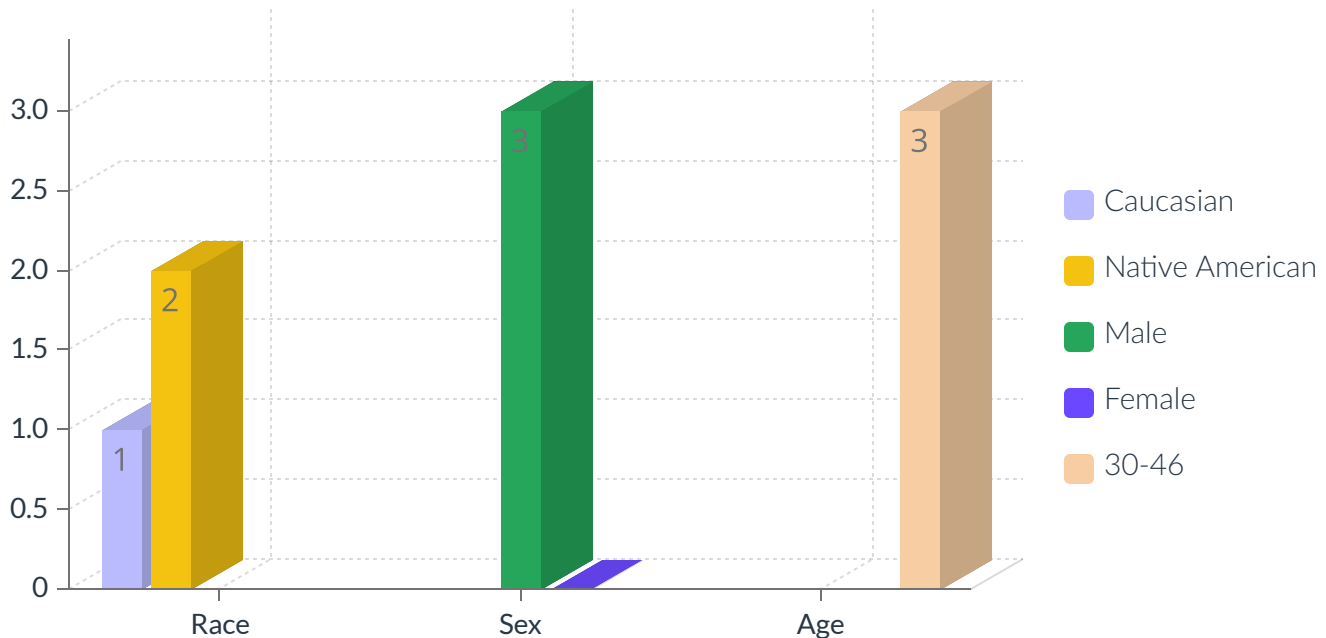


# Officer Involved Shooting (OIS)

While no standard definition exists, PCMEO recognizes Officer-involved shootings as an incident where an on-duty police officer discharges their weapon resulting in the death of a person. These deaths are certified with a manner of homicide.

In 2022, PCMEO investigated three (3) officer-involved shootings.

OIS Death Demographics



Of the three (3) OIS deaths investigated by PCMEO, all were male individuals. Two(2) of the individuals were Native American, and one (1) individual was Caucasian. The individuals' ages ranged from 30-46 years.

# Pinal County In-Custody Deaths

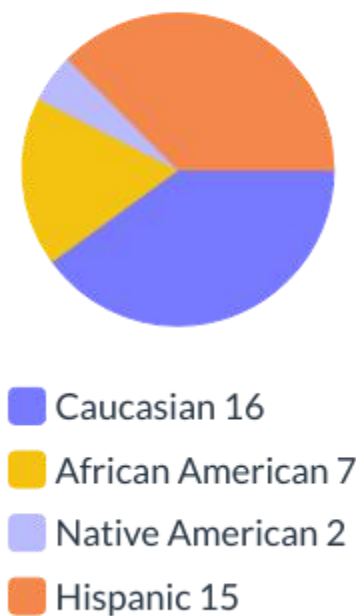


# In-Custody Deaths

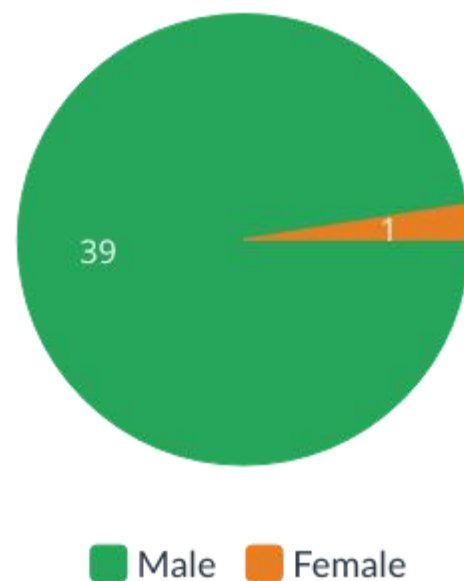
An in-custody death is recognized by PCMEO as a death that occurs while the decedent is in an inmate of the state, county, or private jails/prisons.

In 2022, PCMEO investigated the deaths of forty (40) individuals who were inmates at the time of their death.

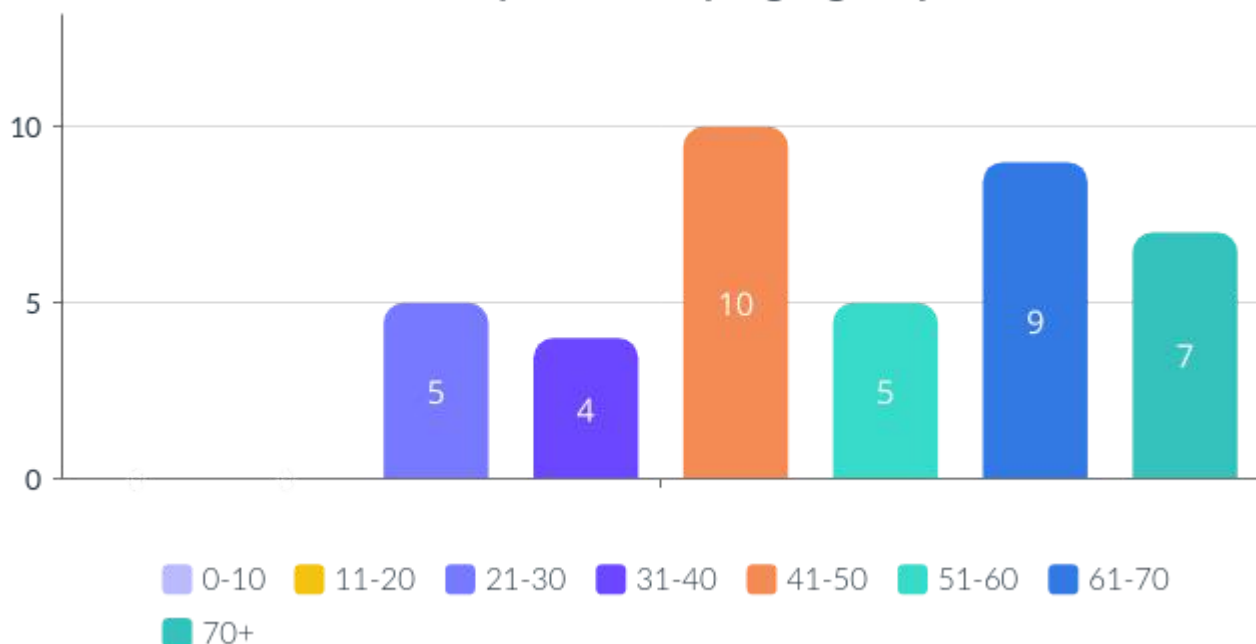
## In Custody Deaths by Race



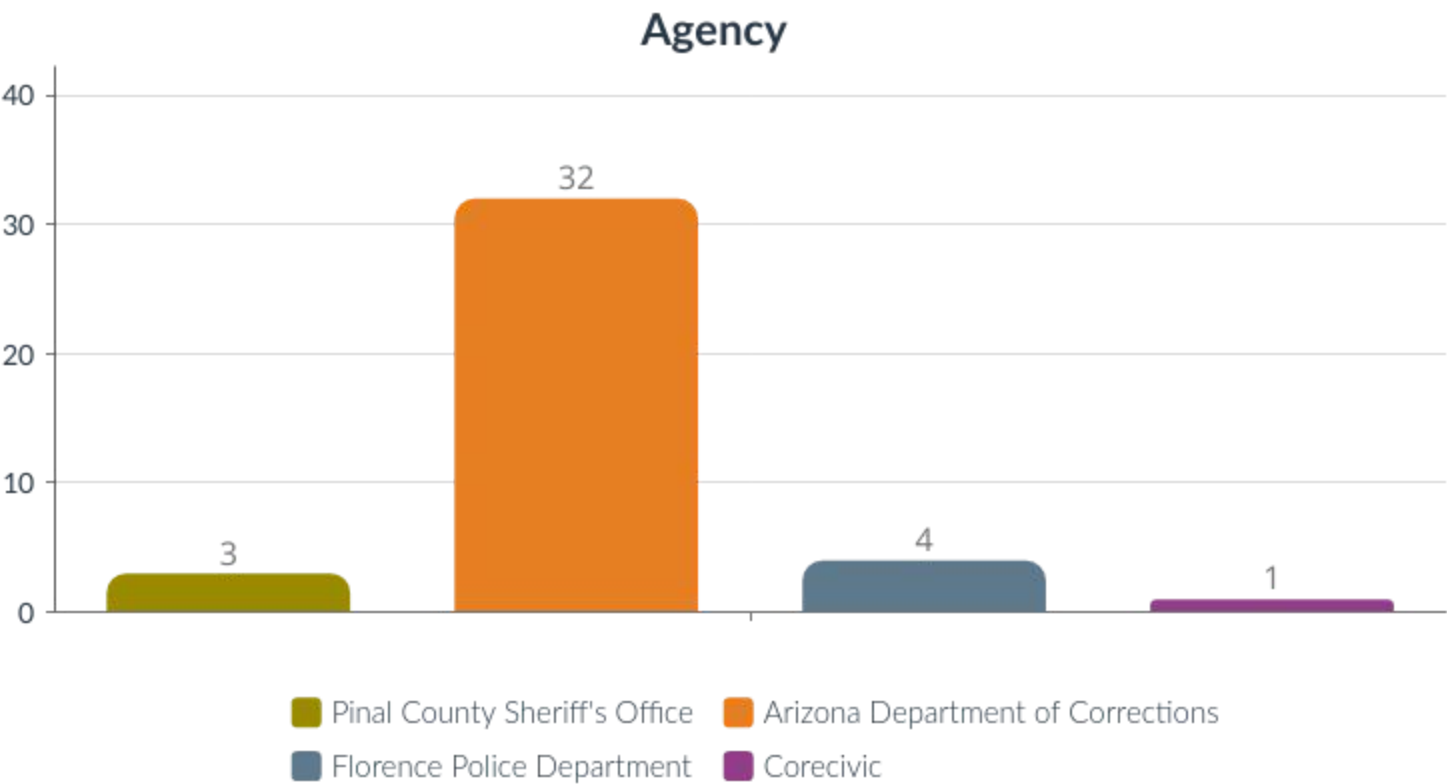
## In Custody Deaths by Sex



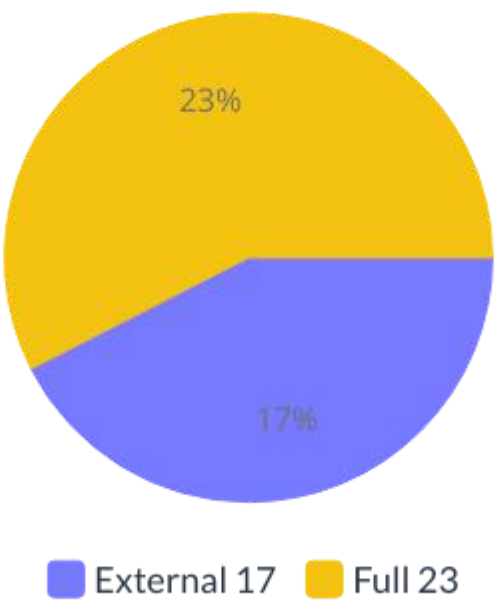
## In-custody Deaths by Age-group



# In-Custody Deaths



## In Custody Deaths by Exam Type



# Deaths Within the Chronically Homeless Community

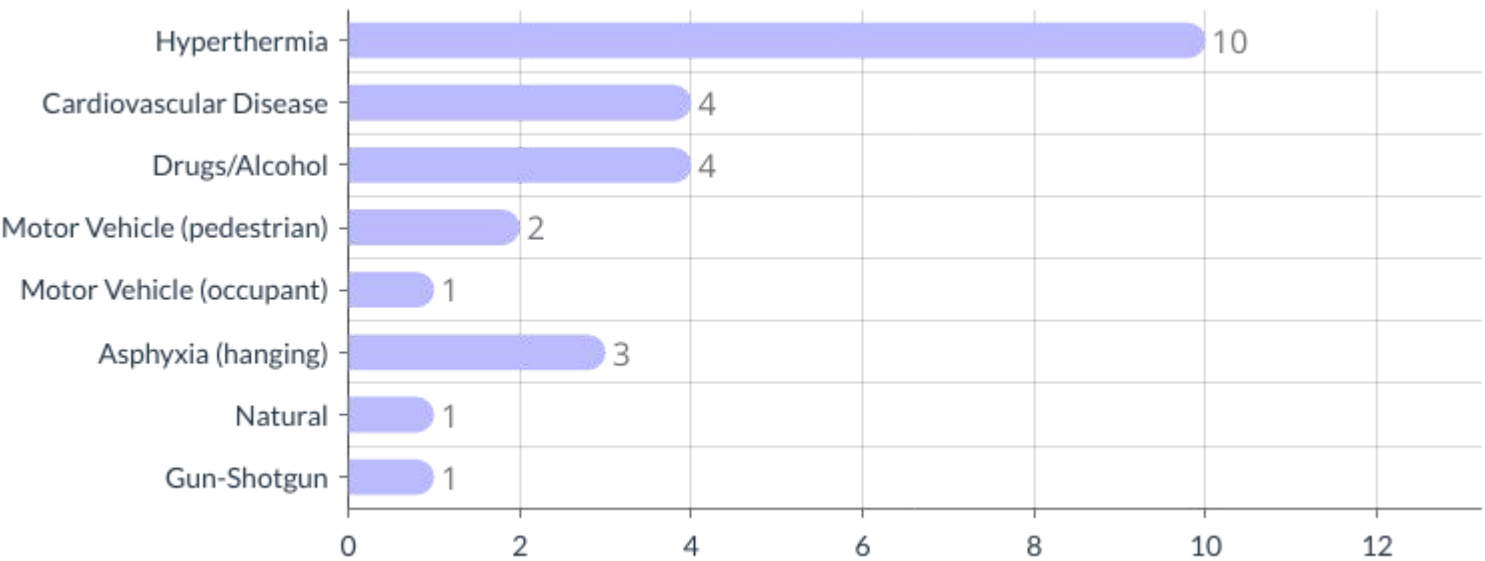


# Deaths of the Homeless

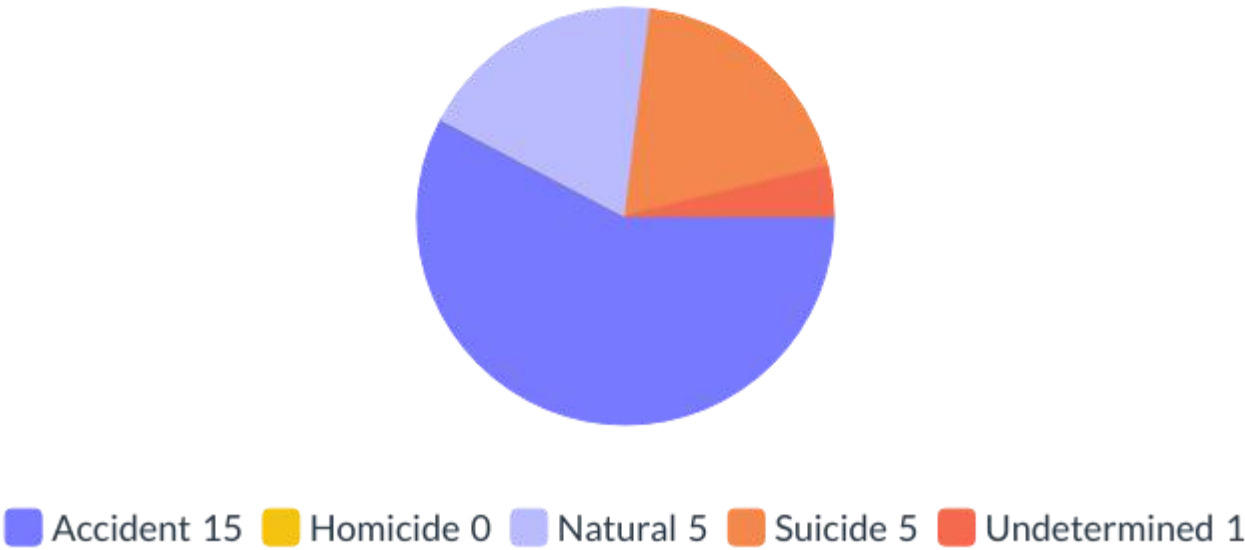
The PCMEO invoked jurisdiction and subsequently determined the cause and manner of death of twenty-six (26) individuals who were homeless at the time of their death.

Please note that the homeless status is not known for all decedents.

Homeless Population Deaths by Type

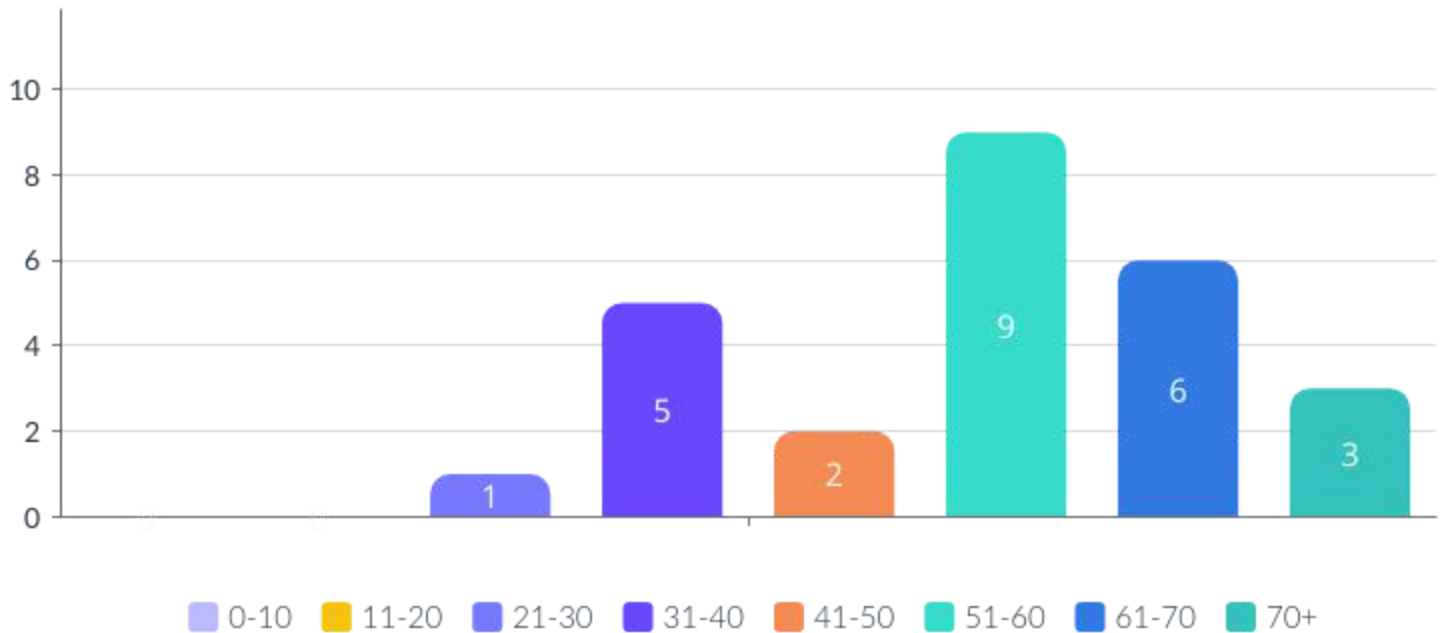


Deaths of the Homeless by Manner of Death

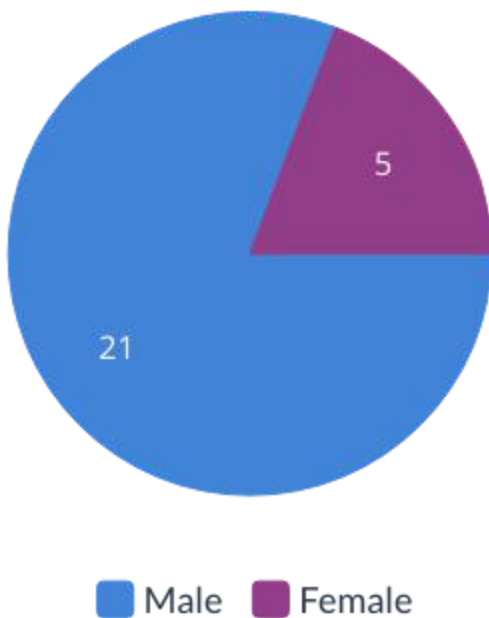


# Deaths of the Homeless

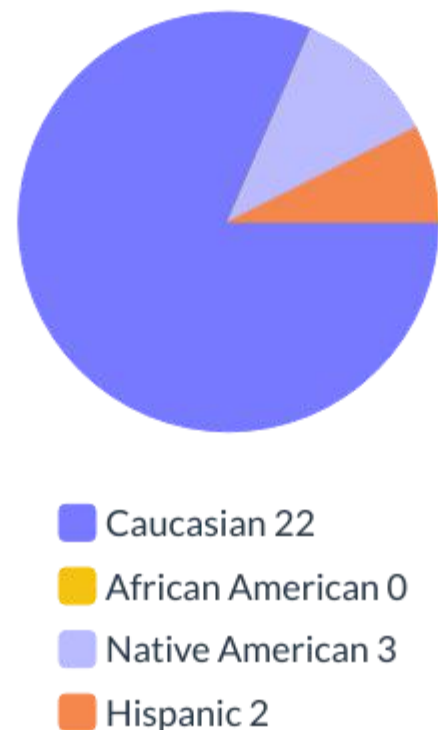
## Undocumented Deaths by Age-group



## Homeless Deaths by Sex



## Homeless Deaths by Race



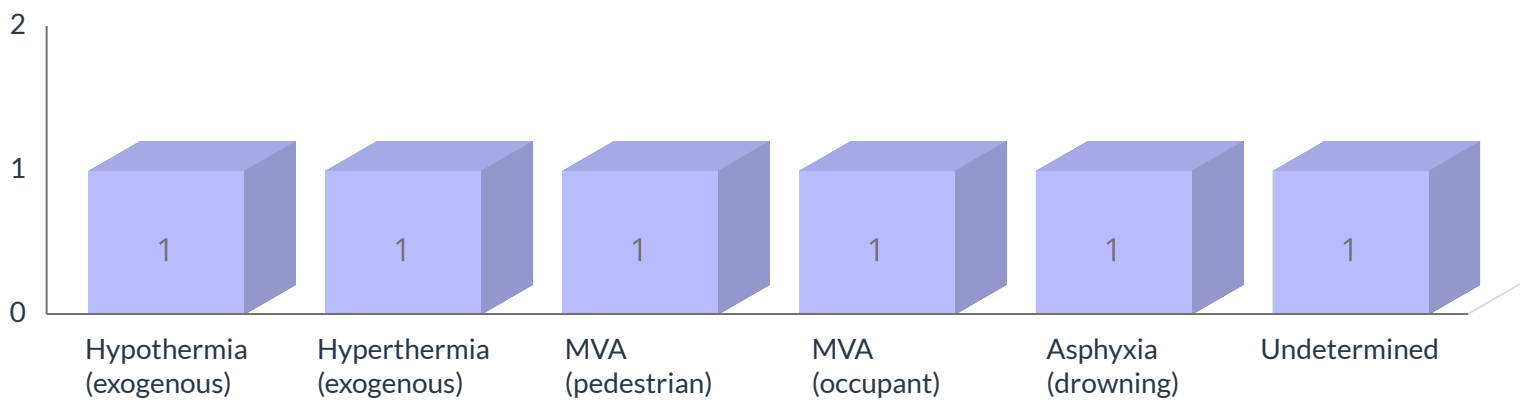
# Deaths of Undocumented Persons

# Deaths of the Undocumented

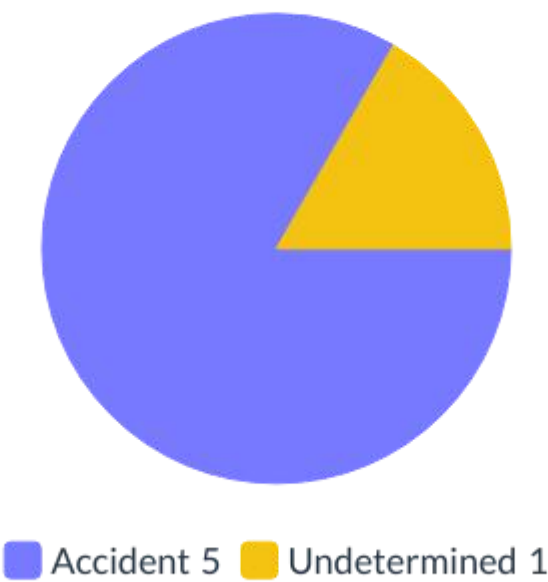
The PCMEO invoked jurisdiction and subsequently determined the cause and manner of death of six (6) individuals who were undocumented at the time of their death.

Please note the undocumented status not known for all decedents.

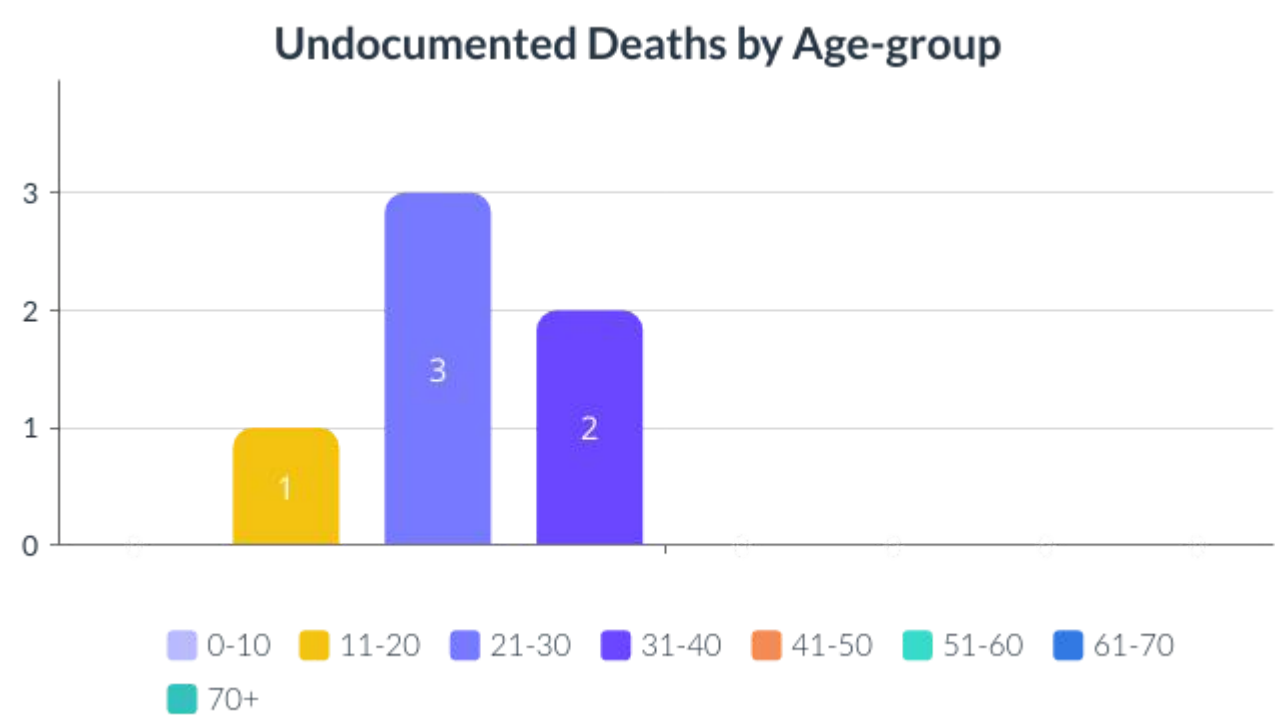
Undocumented Deaths by Type



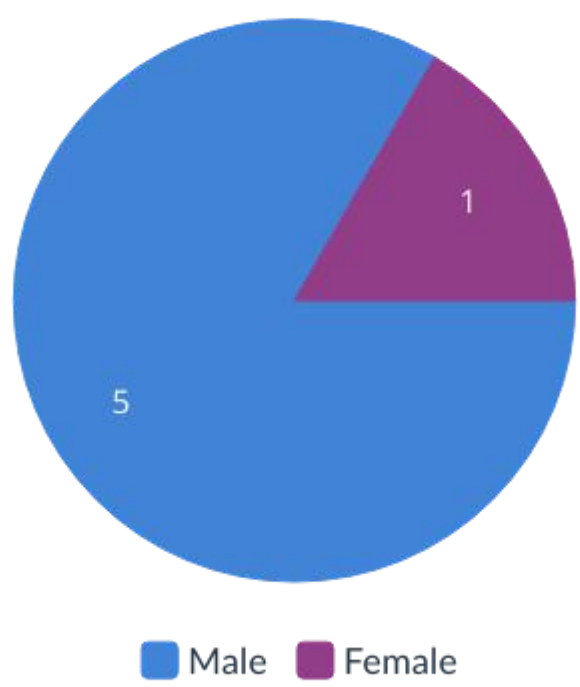
Deaths of the Undocumented by Manner of Death



# Deaths of the Undocumented



### Undocumented Deaths by Sex



# Contact Information

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P.O. Box 2728  
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T 520-866-7260

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[www.pinalcountyz.gov/medicalexaminer](http://www.pinalcountyz.gov/medicalexaminer)

